

Places of Resistance

As noted at the beginning of this book, the place de la Bastille would have many afterlives. Eventually, that once momentous site would be eclipsed by two other emblems of the nation, the Arc de Triomphe and the Eiffel Tower. That cultural competition pushed the Bastille, and its symbolic purchase, to the margins of the Parisian landscape. A poster promoting the 1889 centennial features the Eiffel Tower in the foreground with the Bastille in the background (BnF, 2010: 183). For the bicentennial, in 1989, the Bastille was conspicuously overshadowed by official events at other locations, such as the Trocadero, the Louvre, and the Grande Arche de la Defense. It seems odd that the holiday known as Bastille Day favors state-sponsored celebrations at other sites, thus displacing the place de la Bastille. Filling the void, however, activists of the political left have seized on the place de la Bastille to protest the establishment. In 1989, as a counterweight to the official festivities, demonstrators rallied there to condemn French President François Mitterand's sponsorship of the G7 summit, lingering colonialism, and Third World debt. Other imperial campaigns were again challenged in 1991, when more than 40,000 activists gathered at the venue for an anti-Gulf War rally. Despite occasional gatherings at the place de la Bastille, the site has slipped into the mundane: the Colonne de Juillet "stands isolated, unvisited, unapproachable and almost unnoticed in a multi-lane whirlpool of traffic whose roads run over the unmarked locations of the old fortress walls" (Smith, 1999: 35).

In this final chapter, critical thought is directed again at how a sociology of place informs places of resistance. Recall that Pierre Nora (1989) observed that history bonds with events whereas memory tends to take refuge in places. To untangle the complex threads of resistance, discussion returns to place identity and how sites are transformed according to the dynamics of history and culture. Forceful expressions of resistance are examined in the southern cone of Latin America. For example, in Buenos Aires, community activists transform mundane places into profane places through rituals called *escraches*. Those noisy gatherings target

retired military officers accused of crimes under the last dictatorship, subjecting them to public shaming. As we shall see, places of shame can be transformed into places of resistance while serving as metaphors for human rights.

In Belfast—a place of resistance as well as a place full of places of resistance—the city contends with the complicated symbolism embedded in its post-conflict heritage. There, peace walls figure prominently in the streetscape, forging material and symbolic wedges that contour place identity. Narratives of how political prisoners engaged in collective resistance are among the many messages conveyed about the Troubles, allowing certain profane places to emerge as signs of struggle. Legendary accounts of prison escapes further enhance themes of ascent so as to define and elevate ethnic and political identity. At the end of this chapter, I offer some final thoughts about the afterlives of sites of political imprisonment.

ESCRACHE AS PERFORMING OF RESISTANCE

The notion of place carries tension in post-dictatorship cultures in which repressors are able to live openly and with impunity alongside victims and their relatives (Feierstein, 2014). Such “normalization” of denial generates “an unhealthy tolerance for criminality” that provides torturers and assassins “a place” on the streets and in restaurants, as well as on television screens and at official ceremonies (Kaiser, 2002: 502). Many perpetrators of human rights abuses have been allowed to “recycle” themselves as trusted politicians and business leaders. In Buenos Aires, human rights activists organize events to resist such complacency. Their creative and confrontational tactics transform mundane places into places of the profane. These acts of resistance, known locally as *escraches*, are a unique form of social performance initiated by the grown children of the disappeared. *Escrache*—Argentine slang for “uncover”—crystalizes as “campaigns of public condemnation through demonstrations that aim to expose the identities of hundreds of torturers and assassins benefitting from amnesty laws” (Kaiser, 2002: 499). Large numbers of marchers target neighborhoods where repressors live. There, they hoist banners and chant slogans, such as “Alert! Alert! Alert all neighbors, there’s an assassin living next door to you!” and “Just like the Nazis it will happen to you, wherever you go we’ll go after you” (Kaiser, 2002: 499). These activists are engaging in consciousness-raising, shaming, and stigmatization in ways that collide with the prevailing amnesia.

A sociology of place is in order here. *Escrache* organizers alter the equilibrium of mundane places such as an apartment house by inflicting profane messages on them. Flyers are distributed about the *escrachado* that include his name, his photograph, his address and current occupation, and his complicity in the dictatorship. Once positioned in front of his home, the marchers share a brief ceremony accompanied by speeches, street theatre, and music—all honoring the

spirits of the disappeared. Then the profanity begins: the building and sidewalk are painted with slogans of condemnation. Red paint is commonly used to signify the bloodshed inflicted by the military, a form of pollution reminiscent of the stigma imposed on lepers in medieval times. *Escracheros* use place to agitate the present by bringing back the past, in this way publicly defying impunity and political silence. Protests also have a future trajectory, in that they demand that repressors be stripped of their immunity and prosecuted for crimes against humanity (see D. Taylor, 1997).

At ESMA, a place of memory, posters promoting *escraches* are extensively displayed. Graphics infuse the confrontational tactics surrounding the public spectacle. In advertising one such protest, graphic designers superimposed the images of Cardenal Aramburu and Roberto Alemann, shaming them as “ministers of genocide.” The sponsors, HIJOS, add more detail to the biographies of their *escrachados*, referring to Aramburu as the ex-Archbishop of Buenos Aires and Alemann as the former Minister of the Economy during the dictatorship. Both were allowed to retire “with privilege” (see Morello, 2019). Opposition to the controversial “2 × 1” plan to reduce the prison sentences of repressors is crudely styled with a skull and bones, underscoring the evil of mass murder. Posters announcing *escraches* include precise information about the event: day, date, time, and location all pivot on the notion of place as a venue for action.

Post-dictatorship societies like Argentina retain elements of authoritarianism and even respect for military officers who fought “subversion.” Unsurprisingly, their supporters often use the media to portray the *escrachados* as the *real* victims (i.e., of the political left), drawing on a sympathetic television audience (Ranalletti, 2010). *Escrachados* depict themselves not only as nationalists but also as “good parents” of the children they “adopted” during the “dirty war.” In doing so, they are attempting to turn the profane into the sacred. Enter into the fray HIJOS, the Daughters and Sons For Identity and Justice against Forgetting and Silence, a group organized by the grown children of the disappeared. Alongside other activists, members of HIJOS (the Spanish word for “children”) remind the public that many of the repressors who claim to have been “good parents” were actually raising kidnapped children after their biological parents were murdered by the state. In doing so, they are challenging the status quo and striving to rewrite the political narrative of a benevolent junta (see *The Official Story*, 1985).

Much as in other post-Condor nations, human rights activism in Argentina has for its ally international law, under which torturers and assassins are now more likely to face justice. The arrest of Chilean dictator Pinochet in London in 1998 was an ominous warning to those who have committed atrocities that they are taking chances if they travel abroad (Rhot-Arriaza, 2005). So repressors remain at home, confined to a place that has been described as an “aguantadero” (mafia hideout) (Kaiser, 2002: 502). Performers of *escraches* practice place to restrict the societal space

that repressors have gained from impunity; this allows the gradual “metaphorical repossession of the streets by freeing them from these criminals’ presence . . . a move to tear off the protective shield of anonymity behind which hundreds of torturers hid” (Kaiser, 2002: 504; 2020). Through *escraches*, activists use mundane place to perform profane rituals so as to eradicate pollution; the events thereby provide emotional catharsis for members of HIJOS and other protesters.

RESISTING BELFAST

Once derided as the “Pariah City”—due to the Troubles—Belfast has resisted its reputation as a place to avoid (see Neill, Fitzsimmons, and Murtagh, 1995; Shirlow and Murtagh, 2006). Tourists have discovered a vibrant city that is still managing its difficult past. From the standpoint of a sociology of place, profane themes of descent are rivaled by sacred themes of ascent, thereby establishing cultural binaries that invite a deeper look at Belfast (see Smith, 1999). Even before visitors can absorb the complicated emblems of various neighborhoods, the imposing peace walls give them pause. Although they seem like things of the past, there remain at least 88 partitions designed to separate antagonistic communities (Community Relations Council, 2009). As a diversion from the lingering tensions of the Troubles, the *Titanic* museum, murals, and memorials offer tourists a place to reflect on the greatness of shipbuilding (ascent) in Belfast alongside that vessel’s tragic sinking (descent) in 1912. Its “centenary was viewed by the city council as both a potential tourist attraction and as a nonsectarian symbol for the still materially segregated area . . . with evolving processes of post-conflict place making” (McAtackney, 2020: 78).

Beyond the places devoted to the *Titanic*, the city is defined by its peace walls. In both Unionist/Loyalist and Nationalist/Republican neighborhoods, peace walls provide a canvas for murals and graffiti to communicate ethnic and political identity as well as an identity of place, altogether boasting themes of heroic ascent (see Nisbett and Rapson, 2020; Rolston, 1992, 1998). Murals can also be read as places of resistance where paramilitaries are vividly remembered for their commitment to the struggle. Other places of resistance, such as the Irish Republican History Museum, deliver heavily sectarian narratives on ethno-politics. Images and objects resonate with sacred themes of ascent, including nationalism, sacrifice, and the defense of the eternal good (Smith, 1999; see Katz, 1988). To establish such noble ascent, repressive state power is depicted as a profane force. The cultural binary is thus set for justice to prevail over injustice. For hundreds of years, the Irish response to British colonization has been grounded in strict defiance. One poster, bluntly titled “resistance,” features an intimidating picture of a masked paramilitary volunteer aiming a rifle. The strident words of Bobby Sands reinforce its message.

There can never be peace in Ireland until the foreign, oppressive British presence is removed, leaving all the Irish people as a unit to control their own affairs and determine their own destinies as a sovereign people, free in mind and body, separate and distinct physically, culturally, and economically.

For the Republican movement in the 1980s, the struggle against the British in Northern Ireland gradually incorporated parallel political tactics known as “Armalite and Ballot Box” (McAllister, 2004). Shipments of Armalites (AR-15, AR-18 semi-automatic rifles) were smuggled in from the US to equip the IRA, becoming an emotive symbol of the Republican resistance (Bell, 2000; P. Taylor, 1997). In fact, many of the images of assault weapons in the posters resemble Armalites—nicknamed “the Widowmaker.” The electoral/militant strategy is best exemplified in the campaign conducted by Sands, who was elected to the British parliament while on a hunger strike, a protest that fused resistance with sacrifice. The “Armalite and Ballot Box” slogan is traced back to Danny Morrison, who spoke at the 1981 Sinn Féin conference: “Who here really believes we can win the war through the ballot box? But will anyone here object if, with a paper ballot in this hand and an Armalite in the other, we can take power in Ireland” (English, 2005: 224–25; see also Moloney, 2007; P. Taylor, 1997).

To illustrate the “fight/peace” duality as it thrived in the Republican movement, a series of posters insert another visual device used by graphic artists. The figure makes a decidedly gestalt impression in that it blends a fist with a dove (Humphrey, 1924). At a glance, the fist/dove symbol can be interpreted as either a message of conflict or one of harmony, or both. That parallel political agenda becomes clearer when we remember that Sinn Féin’s POW Committee printed the fist/dove emblem on many of its posters. Especially in West Belfast, Sinn Féin messages endorsing national unity inundate the streetscapes. Since that particular Republican neighborhood borders on a Loyalist one, there is a noticeable symbolic intensity (see Graham and McDowell, 2007; Lindström, Kull, and Palang, 2011).

As noted earlier, visual narrations of the Troubles tend to be highly skewed toward masculinity (Dowler, 1998; Graham and Whelan, 2007). Even the strong role women played in the Republican struggle is often compromised by the presence of dominant male figures (McAtackney, 2018; Scarlata, 2014). One poster, showing two armed women posing with an armed male comrade, is labeled “Oglaigh na hEireann.” (Warriors of Ireland). The three subjects together form a trinity or geometry of force. However, the man is standing while the two women are kneeling, thus projecting a male hierarchy even though the women are presented as brave (and skilled) “warriors” (Welch, 2019). Perhaps the most iconic expression of the female warrior is found in a poster that borrows from a French masterpiece, Eugene Delacroix’s “Liberty Leading the People” (1830). Delacroix romanticizes the July Revolution of 1830 by showing a bare-breasted woman dramatically raising the French tricolor in one hand and holding a bayoneted musket in the other. The scene is depicted with controlled chaos; she towers over fallen bodies and defies the armed men who are charging her. At her feet, a young boy adores her



FIGURE 25. “Liberty Leading the People.” An Irish political poster borrows from a classical French masterpiece by Eugene Delacroix titled “Liberty Leading the People” that romanticizes the July Revolution of 1830. © retrowelch 2022.

majestic courage; another youngster holds up a pistol in choreographed solidarity. The painting’s symbolism is direct. Liberty—also known as Marianne—represents an allegorical goddess guiding France into a new era of Republican Enlightenment (see Boime, 2008). In the Irish version of the warrior, Liberty holds the Republican (tricolor) flag of Ireland. This scene, captioned “the struggle continues . . . 1989

Ireland,” employs a unique visual technique in an effort to lend the image a veneer of authenticity. Rather than appearing as a crass rip-off, the poster renders the original canvas in a manner that reinforces the historical continuity between the Irish struggle and that of the oppressed French (figure 25).

Broader themes of ascent of the Irish Republican struggles are also remembered in the form of institutions. Former prisons, even those (mostly) demolished and off-limits to the public, such as the Maze, remain potent places of resistance. Themes of profane descent as well as sacred ascent are rarely separated. As discussed in chapter 6, the British government under Margaret Thatcher moved to “criminalize” paramilitaries in Northern Ireland by holding them in the Maze prison, which had been built to replace “the Cages” (Long Kesh internment camp). Once confined, political prisoners would be denied Special Category Status. As stigma of their lower status as “ordinary criminals,” prisoners would be compelled to wear state-issued uniforms. That requirement (and loss of special status) was met with fierce opposition, sparking a “blanket protest” that would persist for five years. The first “blanket man” was Kieran Nugent, who became a recognizable figure in the Republican struggle. Refusing to accept the prison uniform, he insisted on wearing only a blanket, which emerged as a symbol of non-compliance. Nugent famously declared: “If they want me to wear a uniform they’ll have to nail it to my back” (Bishop and Mallie, 1987: 349–50). Hundreds of prisoners from the Republican (and Socialist) movement would join the “blanket men” as a shared expression of sacrifice (Campbell, McKeown, and O’Hagan, 1994; O’Rawe, 2005). Several posters in the archive pay tribute to the “blanket men,” including one that shows a photograph of a large public demonstration with marchers holding a banner “Victory to the Blanket Men.”

In 1978, prisoners converted the Maze into a profane place of resistance. Their collective actions escalated into a “dirty [no wash] protest” whereby they refused to empty their chamber pots (the cells lacked toilets and sinks). Upwards of 300 prisoners then smeared their excrement on the walls. By March 1981, that rebuke of confinement had reached primordial levels of pollution and disgust (see Adams’s foreword to Sands, 1998; Douglas, 1966). While visiting the prisoners, Archbishop Cardinal Tomás Ó Fiaich curiously compared the stench and filth to “the sewer pipes in the slums of Calcutta. . . . I was unable to speak for fear of vomiting” (P. Taylor, 1997: 221–22). Ó Fiaich, nevertheless, was struck by their high morale. It seemed that prisoners were keeping their sanity by studying Irish. Some even wrote Irish words into the excrement covering the walls of their cells, a ritual that could be understood as a primitive rite of resistance (Bishop and Mallie, 1987; see Katz, 1988). In solidarity, the “dirty protest” spread to other prisons, including Maghaberry. A poster commemorates the struggle: “Support 1981–2011: The Maghaberry Dirty Protest.” A photograph of a prisoner scrawling on a cell wall coated in excrement is conspicuously positioned within the graphic, thus documenting the profane defiance.

At the Armagh Women's Prison, Mairead Farrell and 30 other Republican prisoners joined the "dirty protest" in 1980. Since they retained their right to wear their own clothes there was no "blanket" protest; still, they smeared their menstrual blood across the cell walls (Coogan, 2002). A poster commemorates the "blanket-men/armagh women historic reunion" (2011). A slogan speaks to the enduring spirit of resistance and solidarity: "Some bonds can never be broken. . . . And they are still loved, by all who knew them well; In a romantic chamber of the heart and in a nostalgic country of the mind where it will always be—1981." The same photograph of the prisoner shown in the "Maghaberry Dirty Protest" is coupled with an illustration of a woman prisoner captioned "STOP strip-searches." An aerial shot of the H-blocks of the Maze prison adds authority to the poster's design; indeed, the H symbol endures simultaneously as an emblem of state oppression and of prisoner resistance. As the Irish prisoners entered the hunger phase of their strike, they made the collective decision to purify themselves by showering, shaving, and allowing their cells to be cleaned by high-powered hoses. As places of resistance, those prisons would transit through various elements of the profane and ultimately be remembered as sacred sites in which the deaths of the hunger strikers would shape a collective consciousness (see Olley, 2007; Purbrick, 2004; Wylie, 2004).

GREAT ESCAPES

Themes of descent coupled with those of ascent inject the Bastille with legendary tales of its famous prisoners. Jean-Henri Chevalier de Latude, in his *Memoirs of Vengeance*, does not disappoint his readers. Latude was no stranger to the Bastille. Over the course of his 28 years in confinement, he had been in and out of the Bastille several times. In 1750, his poorly executed plot to scam the Royal Court landed him in the Bastille, setting the stage for his first escape. Rather than hunkering down and receding into the background, Latude breached his liberty by contacting the monarchy with the wild expectation of receiving a pardon. The plan failed, and he found himself back in the Bastille. Over the next six months, he and his cellmate Alegre threaded together a 300-foot rope ladder. "This extraordinary piece of work required considerable sacrifice since the rungs had to be made from the firewood given to the prisoners during the winter" (Schama, 1990: 395). Becoming personally attached to the ladder, Latude gave his instrument of freedom the names *Jacob* and *Dove* before securing his second escape from the Bastille (Barriere, 1886). He hid out in Amsterdam for nearly three months while agents of the king eventually tracked him down. Upon returning to the Bastille, Latude was placed in the appalling subterranean *cachots*, which ended his winning streak of escapes. In 1777, he was released, but the publication of his memoir caused such a stir that the authorities imprisoned him in the Petit Châtelet and later the Bicetre. Finally, in 1784, he was exiled from Paris, albeit with a royal pension of 400 livres a year. For all his trials and tribulations, Latude was able to survive by

his wits, even becoming a celebrity. The Académie Française showered him with praise, and Thomas Jefferson, then US Ambassador to France, sought his company (Godechot, 1970; Schama, 1990).

The relationship between the Bastille and Latude was renewed when he was invited to survey the site on the July 16, 1789. At that legendary reunion, Latude was presented with the original rope and ladder used for his escape; those charismatic artifacts had been faithfully hidden by the guards for 33 years. “They were ceremoniously offered to the famous escapee as “‘property acquired by just title.’ . . . In the Salon that autumn they were exhibited alongside a splendid portrait of Latude by Antoine Vestier in which the hero points to his escape route and shows the ladder as the attribute of his revolutionary sainthood” (Schama, 1990: 408; BnF, 2010: 61, 145). The afterlife of the Bastille further preserves the adventures of Latude. As part of a collection of souvenirs crafted by Patriot Palloy, a model of the Bastille was fitted with working doors and drawbridges. The clock was set at 5:30: the very moment of surrender. Adding a final touch to the replica, a miniature of Latude’s ladder is hooked to the appropriate turret (Godechot, 1970).

In Montevideo, the City without Memory, some places of resistance are remembered to this day. As noted in previous chapters, the former prison Punta Carretas was transformed—physically and culturally—into a massive shopping mall. In its current incarnation, that commercial compound is decorated with pop art in the form of tall, multicolored shoes and oversized lawn chairs. The details of the fortress-style façade have been refurbished in a style that is non-threatening, defying its past as a place of danger. The edifice now projects a theme-park motif that abandons its original neo-Gothic design. References to its days as a prison are limited to two remnants. First, a photograph of the penitentiary (c. 1985) has been placed inconspicuously near a footpath. Second, a theatre (Teatro de la Candela) on the edge of the property advertises a dramatic production titled “El Abuso: La Fuga de Punta Carretas.” As a departure from commerce and shopping, the story’s main audience is one that has not forgotten the political significance of an ingenious prison escape. In 1971, more than 100 political prisoners (members of an urban guerrilla group, the Tupamaros) carried out an escape code-named “El Abuso” (The Abuse)—the largest jailbreak in world history (see Fernandez, 1998). The artwork on the advertisement contains the letter “T” inside a star—the logo of the Tupamaros. That leftist organization gained notoriety in the 1960s and 1970s for its spectacular kidnappings and assassinations. Among its targets was Dan Mitrione, an FBI agent who was rumoured to have taught torture techniques to the police by practicing his sadistic tactics on the homeless (see Dinges, 2004; McSherry, 2005). The larger story is the subject of the film *States of Siege* (by Costa-Gavras, who also directed *Missing*). Notwithstanding those references to resistance, the dominant narrative at Punta Carretas is still consumerism, which has erased the memory of political repression (see Draper, 2012).

In Belfast, accounts of famous prison escapes are frequently remembered and retold. Stories of Republican jailbreaks are punctuated with ideological expressions that project the perils of descent as well as the triumph of ascent. In Irish culture, prison escapes are an important element of heritage and ritual dating back to 1591, when the Irish clan leaders Hugh Ruadh O'Donnell and Art O'Neil broke away from their English jailers (Foster, 1988). Irish prisoners of war in the modern era have seen it as their duty to escape (P. Taylor, 1997). Defiance is among the chief motives of prison escapes: in an act of solidarity, they join their "fellows in making life as difficult as possible for the authorities" (Cohen and Taylor, 1972: 48). In doing so, they relieve their own boredom, frustrate their captors, share a collective adventure, and contribute to the war effort. According to an IRA commander, "escapes demonstrate to the British that they cannot imprison our struggle, that it continues behind the prison walls and that despite the might of the war machine, their supposedly escape proof prisons, with determination, skill and patience, our Volunteers can defeat them" (McEvoy, 2001: 49). IRA prison escapes are a propaganda coup as well as a valuable source of material and symbolic resistance that mocks the myth of the omnipotent British state. Such victories bolster Irish Republican morale and are celebrated in songs, poetry, and legends that represent Ireland's long struggle for freedom (O'Donoghue, 1971).

Borrowing the visual dynamics of an action movie, a political poster at the Irish Republican History Museum commemorates the 1981 "Great Escape" from the Crumlin Road Prison in which eight IRA volunteers broke out by brandishing three pistols and wearing the uniforms of the officers taken hostage. Illustrations show IRA prisoners bursting out the front gate of the heavily secured jail. Blurry brush strokes accentuate the intensity and velocity of the dramatic escape, with the prisoners firing handguns and knocking down officers. A poem honors those who escaped by referring to them as the "M60 Gang," a four-man active service unit known for their use of heavy machine-guns in targeting British military patrols. The gang included Joe Doherty, who fled to New York City. There, he became a *cause célèbre* as he fought extradition. "For the next nine years, a series of legal battles waged, and Doherty's case became a constellation of highly charged issues, including immigration, Thatcherism, the definition of a political prisoner, Irish American ethnic identity, and ethno-nationalist conflict in Northern Ireland" (Searcy, 2015). Frank Durkan, an Irish American human rights attorney, contacted then-New York City mayor David Dinkins in 1990 just before Nelson Mandela's historic visit to the city, writing: "A short distance from your office, another political prisoner is about to begin his eighth year of incarceration although never having been convicted of—or even charged with—a crime in the United States" (Searcy, 2015). Doherty's protracted legal battle ended with his deportation to Northern Ireland, where he was reincarcerated. His political legacy endures in lower Manhattan, where the street intersection near the federal jail has been named "Joseph

Doherty Corner,” becoming a cultural monument to the Irish Republican struggle as honored by the Irish diaspora (see Dillon, 1992; Greg, 2013).

Back in Belfast, memories of the Maze as a place of resistance are cherished in the most daring prison escape in IRA history. The plan was launched in 1983 inside the H-Blocks, considered the most secure prison in Europe. The fortified institution was tucked behind 15-foot fences and an 18-foot concrete containment wall wrapped in barbed wire. Solid steel gates were electronically controlled by a state-of-the-art communication system. The escape benefited from lengthy deliberations among the IRA leadership. As in previous breakouts, the plot involved smuggling in weapons, taking guards hostage, and confiscating their uniforms. In all, 38 prisoners broke out, prompting an extensive manhunt into Europe and the US that would last for years. An upbeat image—and dramatic theme of ascent—reminds us that anniversaries are important cultural moments in Irish Republican history: “the great escape: 25th Anniversary, 25 Years to the Exact Day.” A photographic collage commemorates each of the escapees. Assembled into a group shot, the image speaks to their collective defiance and shared solidarity. A picture of an H-Block guard tower makes a brooding appearance, symbolizing the role of imprisonment in the British occupation of Ireland. In the form of a montage, the imagery captures the intersection and interaction of themes of descent with themes of ascent, casting a sociology of place onto a wider topography.

AFTERLIVES AND AFTERTHOUGHTS

As conceptualized throughout this book, the Bastille Effect represents the unique ways former prisons and detention centers are transformed both physically and culturally. In their afterlives, those sites deliver critiques on justice as it prevails over injustice. However, for that narrative to emerge, the sites must be purified of their profane past, giving them a new place identity. By relinquishing their use-value attached to incarceration and embracing their signifying-value, many of these sites have been reconfigured into a places of enlightenment that offer inspiring allegories on human rights and the struggle against state repression.

To summarize briefly how the Bastille Effect served as organizing principle for this project, four main parts were established so as to frame particular chapters. In Part One, “The Sacred and the Profane,” the notion of cultural afterlives allowed us to decipher the dynamic interchange between forces purity and danger. Those binaries very much inform a sociology of place. In many of the examples scattered throughout the book, we discovered that in the course of transforming a former site of political imprisonment into a memorial, the space is animated by being *personed*. Consider an imaginary Nelson Mandela in his cell at Robben Island. While discussing the States of Confinement, we learned that certain political prisoners are transformed from low to high status. Through that conversion, the foundation of human rights is also elevated. Part Two, “In Search of Signs,” introduced

us to the Sites of Trouble in Northern Ireland. In that context, the heritage of political prisoners is emotionally contested. Depending on one's ethnic point of view, the low status of a "common criminal" is inverted into the high status of a "freedom fighter," or vice versa. The presence of boundaries in the form of partitions and peace walls heightens those distinctions. Shifting focus to the southern cone of Latin America, Operation Condor and its parallel "dirty wars" unfolded in response to the anxieties of danger and "subversion"—only to be resolved in justice campaigns as those nations transitioned to democracy. Indeed, places such as ESMA in Buenos Aires project a resounding Bastille Effect as a metaphor for humanity. Other transformed sites, most notably the shopping mall at Punta Carretas, demonstrate the failure of memorialization, a reminder that a Bastille Effect is not inevitable.

Part Three, "The Diagrams of Control," delved into economics, religion, and architecture. Among the valuable lessons from Montreal during the rebellions of 1837 and 1838 was that the struggle over commerce and agriculture is also influenced by contested heritage. As with the failed uprising against the British in Dublin in 1916, the Patriotes' insurgence and their subsequent executions transformed local and regional culture. La Prison-des-Patriots, like the "Bastille of Ireland," has been injected with memories of courage and nationalism. The nuances of Catholicism, the next topic explored, throw crucial light onto the sacred and profane in that religious workers in Argentina were scapegoated as "subversive" and confined to clandestine detention centers. Within those polluted places, political prisoners were tortured and later exterminated. Their memories, however, persevere in ways that acknowledge moral purity. As another diagram of control, the use of panoptics to penetrate an entire social body speaks to the power of architecture. Resorting to violent spectacles, dictatorships in the southern cone created the allusion of an omniscient deity in which citizens absorbed the gaze of a God-like tyrant.

The chapters in Part Four scan the "Technologies of Power" as they transform the mind (through censorship and propaganda), the body (through torture), and society (through extermination). Those breaches of human rights are carefully documented in former prisons and detention centers, allowing those sites to be repurposed from places of pain to places of learning. The book concludes with a pair of writings on the performance of memory. To reiterate, the duality of danger and purity is unleashed in complex forms of consecration and desecration. Even in instances where a former prison is physically demolished, such as the Maze, the spirits of martyred political prisoners reside elsewhere, in heritage museums and memorial gardens. To be sure, the Bastille Effect is not restricted to particular places. Rather it is culturally fluid, migrating with transcendence—and with themes of ascent, those forces spill into a collective consciousness.