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PART ONE

# The Sacred and the Profane



# Cultural Afterlives

Renowned scholar Jacques Godechot is, indeed, correct in stating that by the end of the 18th century, the Bastille had emerged as more than just a prison. The infamous site had become a reminder of a feudal system that had grown increasingly obsolete, given its arbitrary power. The storming of the Bastille on July 14, 1789, is regarded as decisive event in the French Revolution even though it was less a strategic loss for the monarchy than an emblematic victory for the people. “July 14 thus marks the culmination of two great currents, the uprising of the people of Paris, which was one aspect of the great national uprising that had been underway for several months, and the defection of the troops, another aspect of the same national insurrection. The capture of the Bastille served as a marvelous symbol, for France and the world, of the triumph of this insurrection” (Godechot, 1970: 249).

The afterlives of the Bastille set the stage for this study of former prisons and detention centers that have been reconfigured into symbolic sites so as to emit narratives on social upheaval and repressive control. In the pages that follow, those transformations are explored in post-conflict cities in diverse countries where memorialization relies on the power of place to reflect on the injustice of political imprisonment. With cultural sociology at our disposal, this book unveils the enduring dynamics that animate these varied places of confinement. At a universal level, remnants of political imprisonment reveal the ubiquity of socio-religious forces, most notably the sacred vis-à-vis the profane. Those potent social themes are deeply embedded in forms of identity and heritage at the local level—whether it be Belfast amid the Troubles or Buenos Aires during the last dictatorship. This opening chapter invites us to consider those developments by taking into account the significance of cultural afterlives. Notions of place will guide our understanding of what we shall refer to as the Bastille Effect whereby former carceral institutions undergo a dual transformation. Those sites shed their violent past

while opening themselves for public scrutiny and thoughtful re-examination of state crimes that occurred on those same premises. Transformed sites activate a collective imagination in ways that cast a powerful light on human rights and the contemporary struggle for democratic equality.

#### THE BASTILLE AND ITS AFTERLIVES

To chronicle the afterlives of the Bastille, sociologist Philip Smith (1999) delves into how the cultural meaning of place has changed over the course of history. The Bastille was a fortress prison where the monarchy had long disposed of political opponents and other nuisances. Durkheim would have considered the Bastille a profane symbol, or as Smith puts it, “a polluted place” (1999: 23). The Revolution with its patriotic heroes and blood sacrifice altered not only the nation but also the Bastille itself, allowing myth to transform it from a profane to a sacred place. Decades later, however, the site fell into neglect as its moats filled with stagnant water and patches of wild grass. That particular afterlife lost its capacity to evoke the sacred; the Bastille had become an ill-defined and desolate place (Lemoine, 1930).

Enter Napoleon, who was determined to reverse the Bastille’s symbolic dysfunction. To commemorate his military adventures in the Orient, in 1806 he ordered that a giant fountain in the shape of an elephant be built on the site. Architects and other cultural advisers failed utterly to convince him that an elephant was not a fitting—let alone elegant—image for the tribute. “Project Elephant” moved forward, but instead of a fountain it would be a wooden and plaster model standing 24 meters tall. From 1817 to 1847, that behemoth occupied the place de la Bastille, where it decayed physically and aesthetically. “In 1847, the sad history of the elephant came to an appropriate end. It was finally thrown into the canal/sewer on the order of Prefect Rumbuteau. Crowds watched as rats escaped from the sinking monument” (Smith, 1999: 28).

Political campaigns aimed at scouring the site of its pollution and restoring its sacredness now gained considerable traction. In 1830, lawmakers approved a plan to erect the *Colonne de Juillet*. This memorial would be dedicated to the patriots who had sacrificed themselves on July 14 (1789) as well as to those who had perished during the “Three Glorious Days” in July 1830. The 50-meter column in center of the place de la Bastille rises from a tomb in which the remains of 504 fighters are buried. Their names engraved on the foundation make a clear cultural statement about its appropriateness as a sacred place. “The monument is both a shrine to fallen heroes and a demonstration that liberty rises from the sacrifices of the fallen. . . . It is a monument whose aesthetic resonates past against present, drawing intertextually upon the narrative of the Bastille, tuning into, configuring and amplifying the popular mythologies of the site” (Smith, 1999: 29). The sculpture is

topped by the Genie de la Bastille (or Genie de la Liberté), who hoists a torch in one hand and a broken chain in the other. Hence, the site of a former prison now embodies the revolutionary spirit. Themes of ascent are evident: the memorial now serves as an expression of the sovereignty of the people and a rallying point for revolutionary activity. In 1848, the bodies of 52 protesters shot by the military were arranged around the column to the cries of “Vengeance! Aux barricades.” The solemn procession was capped by an act of profane purification: the throne of Louis-Phillipe was torched. Rituals of revolution again were ignited at the place de la Bastille in 1871 when the Communards erected their own barricades there (Sewell, 1996). To appreciate the importance of cultural afterlives, we turn to a sociology of place.

### PLACE, SPACE, AND GHOSTS

Smith (1999) recognizes that the iconography—or representation—of space has caught the interest of scholars from an array of perspectives: cultural, postmodern, and ideological. Taking a decidedly Durkheimian stance, Smith insists that place is formed by myths and narratives that become institutionalized through monuments, the mass media, and various other routines. Such rituals, however, hold differing meanings for different observers. As we will discuss in greater depth, the Troubles in Northern Ireland illustrate that “divergent typifications can lead violent and symbolic struggles over the meaning of places” (Smith, 1999: 16; Welch, 2019). As a way forward, Smith offers a template for discerning how identities of place are transformed and preserved through action. Accordingly, place identity is constructed in four basic domains: the sacred, the profane, the liminal, and the mundane.

The sacred lends purity to special places, enabling close contact with the transcendental and producing emotional reactions such as awe and reverence. Its opposite, the profane, contains pollution and evil so that the psychic register migrates toward revulsion. Everyday places are best understood as mundane; in these, ordinary behavior goes on without much reflection. As a departure from the mundane, liminal places thrive in suspending everyday rules and traditional moralities. In such places, narratives of the quasi-ritualized carnivalesque add cultural energy to the out-of-the-ordinary. “They are often comedic in character, offering a ludic conception of place, or else ‘absurd’ in the sense that they are fragmented and defy any easy classification or ontological grounding except that they are ‘other’ to the everyday” (Smith, 1999: 20). This fourfold framework is not static since places have the dynamic capacity to morph into other types depending on a mobilizing action or event. Once that rupture occurs, a new place identity is reinforced by rituals and monuments that serve as cultural markers, in this way institutionalizing the narratives of place (see Bell, 1997; Sewell, 1996).

It is easy to use the terms space and place interchangeably. Nonetheless, there are some distinctions to make, as Michael Mayerfeld Bell suggests: “Space refers to the three-dimensional coordinates of things. A place is a particular space that has meaning” (1997: 833). Bell is quick to caution that such distinctions ought not to be reified because, like many categories, they tend to dissolve at the margins. Therefore, according to Bell, “when I speak of place I am emphasizing issues of meaning more than I would be if I were speaking about space” (1997: 833; see also Agnew and Duncan, 1989). For Bell, place is rife with meaning. More to his point, places are occupied not only by objects, images, and people but also by ghosts. Without resorting to superstition, ghosts can be defined as imaginary entities that inhabit places. They cannot be seen yet their presence is felt. For example, a somewhat mystical experience occurs when we revisit an old “haunt” of our youth: ghosts emerge as memories of people who are no longer around. That moment is likely to deliver an emotional charge, be it positive or negative. With respect to historical sites, ghosts contribute to the specificity of places. “Places are, in a word, personed—even when there is no one there” (Bell, 1997: 813; see also Mayerfeld and Murray, 2001).

Ghosts are ubiquitous in places in ways that give them life, Bell insists, making space a place. The Bastille, even after its demolition, remained haunted by the ghosts of its many colorful prisoners, including de Sade, Voltaire, and the “Man in the Iron Mask” (BnF, 2010). Visitors to the place de la Bastille activate the social relations of memory by imagining the physical site as it might have appeared during its tenure as a prison. Many observers are keenly aware that the boulevards surrounding the Colonne de Juillet are paved with the Bastille’s original stones, and this enables them to connect with history. As Bell further notes, “the ghosts of place are not only ghosts of the past; they can as well be of the present, and even the future” (1997: 816). With profound sadness and sacredness, many of these places become memorials to those who were sacrificed in a place that had been profoundly profane. As a place, ESMA in Buenos Aires was transformed from a rather mundane institution for training naval cadets into a profane place of state terror where victims were detained, tortured, and exterminated. The compound retains the ghosts of its polluted past while forging ahead as a sacred place of memory. The top floors of the site seem especially haunted. In some areas, placards and storyboards steer visitors through spaces where detainees were confined; other areas are devoid of any narration. Empty sectors of a larger place are more likely to be “personed”—or seemingly inhabited by ghosts and spirits (see figure 1). Bell reminds us that we experience places as having ghosts because those sites are engaged socially. Simply put, we experience places as we do people. “Through ghosts, we re-encounter the aura of social life in the aura of place” (1997: 821).

A sociology of place, space, and ghosts extends beyond sites to encompass entire communities. In his ethnography of Belfast during the Troubles, Feldman encountered the saturation of death, or what he calls “symbolic genocide,” the “erasure of ethnicity and ethnic spaces,” and “the cartography of death events—



FIGURE 1. “ESMA: Former Detention Space.” On the top floors of the Casino at ESMA, the former detention space seems especially connected to its profane past. © retrowelch 2022.

the spaces of the dead” (1991: 65). Below, that sense of collective defilement is accumulated into an Irish death-warning tale, followed by a ghost story:

The night before Francie Legget got dead, a girl from this area was coming from her friend’s house. . . . She seen a banshee sitting on the wall. . . . [I]t was a wee small withered woman crying with tears and mourning. . . . [T]he following Friday morning Francie Leggett was shot dead on the spot.





FIGURE 2. “Memorial to Gerald McAuley.” In a Catholic community in Belfast, a memorial to Gerald McAuley, a victim of the Troubles, is open to the public. © retrowelch 2022.

There have been so many horrendous deaths in this district over the years that there has to be ghosts. (Catholic housewife, St. James district; Feldman, 1991: 66)

Feldman writes that the presence of ghosts in such communities is attributed to the sheer magnitude and randomness of death within a limited space and time. “In folk explanation, ghosts are the inevitable excess of the defilement which emerges from the flooding of social space with death” (1991: 67). The banshee and the ghost become free-floating signifiers within a liminal place where the conventional order of time and space no longer governs. Places of death often spawn places of resistance where forces of the sacred, the profane, and the mundane not only intersect but also interact. In Belfast, special gardens memorialize the victims of political violence. In 1969, Loyalist rioters targeted the Catholic community, burning down homes, most notably on Bombay Street. The “onslaught entered nationalist folk history as the ‘pogrom’” (Taylor, 1997: 52). Among those who perished was Gerald McAuley, a 15-year-old who was shot dead by a Loyalist gunman. The tragedy was deepened as it became known that McAuley was helping residents flee their homes on Bombay Street (Coogan, 2002; Quinn, 2019). At the neighborhood memorial site, a large billboard reenacts those events. The space marks a

cultural transformation from the profanity of sectarian violence to a sacred place. It is dedicated to the memory of Gerald McAuley (see McKittrick, Kelters, Feeney, and Thornton, 2001; figure 2).

### CULTURAL TRANSFORMATIONS

The afterlives of place are informed by historical thought and concepts of memory. Pierre Nora reminds us that history tends to attach itself to events whereas memory clings to places. Given that power of place, it is within “*les lieux de memoire* where memory crystalizes and secretes itself” (1989: 7). History remains a representation of the past; memory is affective and nourishes recollections that may be out of focus, thereby “tying us to the present” (8). Nora deepens our insights by casting history as prosaic, particularly against the rich dynamics of memory, which bind certain people together since “memory takes root in the concrete, in spaces . . . [becoming] sites for anchoring its memory” (1989: 9). That cultural transformation is evident in sites of political imprisonment, which have the potential to be reinvented for contemporary remembrance.

Such transformation, by design, produces reflection. For our purposes here, reflection has two meanings: first, contemplation; and second, the mirroring of something else. Former prisons and detention centers have been rebuilt as memorial spaces that encourage visitors to reflect on past atrocities. To facilitate that experience, those sites often contain artifacts intended to represent other things. Instruments of torture, for example, are commonly displayed in memorial spaces. Once on display, those objects attain special meaning as something worthy to consider since they represent the suffering experienced by prisoners. For that transformation to occur, the torture device must pass from use-value to signifying-value (Welch, 2015; Williams, 2007). In its previous incarnation the device was used to inflict pain; having undergone cultural conversion, the same object has become a symbol of state repression. Indeed, entire sites pass through a similar form of cultural transformation in ways that demonstrate how signifying-value can facilitate use-value—for example, by offering lessons from the past. At the ESMA memorial space, visitors are frequently reminded that they are entering a reconstruction of the detention, torture, and extermination center administered by the last dictatorship. In this way, visitors are able to experience “safe contact” with a site that no longer harms people. The site then offers enough evidence of pain to prompt reflection. Whereas dark tourism often delivers cheap thrills, the Bastille Effect aims at a higher degree of enlightenment (Lennon and Foley, 2010; Welch, 2020). Through cultural maneuvering, profane places are transformed into sacred spaces as well as places for learning. It is the reconceptualization of sites that has inspired this book. Allow me to explain how we go from here to there.

## FROM HERE TO THERE

This journey through various cities requires some signposting in order to clarify where we are going and why. As we transit from place to place, it is important for us to realize that these sites are selective, based on my own scholarly interests in post-conflict societies. In particular, Belfast and Buenos Aires: two very different cities that were plunged into turmoil under very different circumstances. From the 1960s until the late 1990s, a low-level war—the Troubles—in Northern Ireland divided a country and its cities, where political violence was a daily event. In the 1970s, Buenos Aires became the focal point of a dictatorship that would consume Argentina well into the 1980s. It is difficult to compare the two societies in terms of the sheer magnitude of the human rights atrocities they faced; we can, though, say they shared a common and openly expressed sense of loss and memory. Visitors to Belfast and Buenos Aires who are willing to take notice encounter significant manifestations of past injustice. This book examines the sites and symbols of those conflicts in Belfast and Buenos Aires, and in other cities as well. What follows is my story, which contains many stories. Those stories offer narratives about the Bastille Effect as former prisons and detention centers undergo cultural transformations in ways that enhance the pursuit of justice.

This book represents a deliberate effort to build on my previous book, *Escape to Prison: Penal Tourism and the Pull of Punishment* (2015). Among many things, that volume offered an in-depth analysis of Robben Island and the Old Fort in Cape Town, and Johannesburg, respectively. Those former prisons—and their cities—are synonymous with Nelson Mandela, who served 27 years in captivity, becoming one of the world's most famous political prisoners. *Escape to Prison* also includes my experience at a comparable institution in Seoul, South Korea, the Seodaemun Prison History Hall. The afterlife of that site remembers the fate of thousands of Korean political prisoners persecuted by Japanese imperialists before and during the Second World War. Having finished that book, it was time for me to move on to other things, or so I thought. As it turns out, the idea of political imprisonment would take hold as my next major undertaking, though I would not neglect the lessons of penal tourism and the pull of punishment.

To concentrate more fully on the historical and cultural implications of political imprisonment, I adopted Paris as a summer research home for five years. During that stretch of time, the meaning of the Bastille captured my attention, especially in light of its mythic presence in the popular imagination. Moreover, I realized that its representation as a sign of repression was rivaled by the triumphant forms of resistance it embodied. That yin-and-yang dualism might be better interpreted sociologically by way of the sacred versus the profane, especially in post-conflict societies. With the benefit of what I learned in Paris about the Bastille, I moved on to a series of cities to study other sites and symbols of political confinement. In Dublin, the Kilmainham Gaol is widely regarded as the “Bastille of Ireland.” The former prison, with its striking Victorian architecture, has reopened its gates to

loads of tourists interested in expanding their knowledge of Irish political history against the backdrop of British colonialism. Heading north on the Emerald Isle, the Crumlin Road Gaol in Belfast offers more Victorian narratives on empire. That site, and various historical collections scattered around the city, paved the way for an informed interpretation of the Troubles, thus demonstrating how political imprisonment has contributed to a heritage that is cherished as well as contested by Irish and British identities (Welch, 2019).

In 2017, I relocated (again) to Buenos Aires, where several former detention, torture, and extermination centers have been resurrected as memorial spaces. For months, I scoured the city for the afterlives of places of confinement, finding clear patterns of profanity overcome by the sacred. Those sites in turn joined a vast network of memorial spaces in neighboring nations also ravaged by repressive regimes. To immerse myself in those post-conflict societies, I moved to Santiago (Chile) to examine the various places where victims of Pinochet were confined, including the National Stadium, where sectors of the concourse have been preserved as they existed during the coup of September 11, 1973 (known as the Chilean 9/11). Since the Argentine and Chilean dictatorships had formed coalitions with other military despots, I spent considerable time visiting similar sites in Asunción (Paraguay) and Montevideo (Uruguay) as they projected a collective memory of pain and anguish (Welch, 2020).

Along the way, I realized that these cities and their transformed sites of political imprisonment contain evidence of cultural influence from abroad, most notably Europe. Since the late 19th century, Buenos Aires has welcomed Irish immigrants, affectionately referred to as “Los Irish Porteños.” During the “dirty war,” some of them—particularly those belonging to the activist clergy—were swept up along with thousands of others who disappeared. At former detention sites, memorials have been raised to honor them. Their ranks include Patrick Rice, an Irish Catholic priest who devoted his life to serving the poor as well as families victimized by the military (see Welch, 2020). Similar ethnic markings are visible in Montreal, where the local Irish took up arms with the Québécois to fight British rule in the 1830s. As so often happens to defeated insurgents, the Irish in Quebec faced political imprisonment followed by summary executions at a site renamed La-Prison-des-Patriotes. In its current incarnation, the place reflects on events that could have changed the course of history, but didn’t.

Throughout my travels, I learned a great deal about how these cities serve as vibrant backdrops in support of the afterlives of former prisons, memorial spaces, and historical exhibitions. In *Artifacts and Allegiances: How Museums Put the Nation and World on Display* (2015), Peggy Levitt relies on cities to decipher local—and global—stories as told through various cultural institutions. As a like-minded sociologist, Levitt points to the enduring contributions of Robert Park, who in 1915 described the city as a “state of mind, a body of customs and traditions, and of the organized attitudes and sentiments that inhere in these

customs and are transmitted with this tradition” (qtd in Sennett, 1969: 91). Toward that same end, trusted urban explorer Lewis Mumford invites all of us to appreciate cities given that their stories “can be read through a succession of deposits: the sedimentary strata of history” ([1938]1970: 223). Having said all that, cities, like the nations wrapped around them, undergo transformation due to an array of forces. Political upheaval is just one of those forces and remains the underlying condition for this project as we travel from city to city in search of the afterlives of confinement.

Let me summarize the path ahead. In the next chapter, we delve into the nature of confinement as contoured along political lines and how the categories of *criminal*, *subversive*, and even *terrorist* remain in flux. Some additional historical lessons allow us to sort out those complexities. The discussion then turns to select autobiographies in tandem with related works focusing on Northern Ireland and the southern cone of Latin America. From there, I introduce a series of case studies that illuminate how post-conflict societies grapple with memory and transform sites accordingly. It has been said that an essential feature of the city is drama—especially *social* drama (Mumford, [1938]1970). In chapter 3, the social drama of the city pivots on the Troubles as those events have shaped Dublin and Belfast. By its very nature, the word “Troubles” speaks to tense entanglements among a cast of characters, their dialogues, and their audiences. While that euphemism has been used to describe the more recent conflict in Northern Ireland, the expression was common in all of Ireland, particularly during the 1916 Easter Rising, followed by the War of Independence and the Irish Civil War. The cultural residue of the Troubles reaches so deep into Irish society that it invokes socio-religious meaning; correspondingly, references to sacrifice and martyrdom are firmly embedded in a collective memory of political imprisonment. In both Dublin and Belfast, assorted cultural emblems have been folded into transformed sites so as to sway recognizable expressions of heritage (see Welch, 2016a).

With the benefit of knowing how the afterlives of cultural sites have emerged in Ireland, chapter 4 concentrates on the southern cone of Latin America, where Operation Condor and a series of “dirty wars” have shaped a wider consciousness about human rights atrocities. The afterlives of detention, torture, and extermination centers are examined in the capital cities of Buenos Aires, Santiago, Asunción, and Montevideo. In those places, critiques of the dictatorships are delivered through a cultural system of messages about death as well as survival. Those testimonies constitute what Pierre Nora (1989, 2002) detects as an upsurge in memory that refutes the “official” versions of history perpetuated by military and financial elites. The ensuing discussion sorts out the various strains of remembering and forgetting.

Chapter 5 recounts the economic disaster that would define Irish history: the Great Famine. In Dublin, in an effort to conceal so much poverty, British officials transformed the imposing Kilmainham Gaol into a “warehouse” for the poor.

From that very site, many Irish were transported to the colony of Australia, where they worked as prisoners, producing financial gain for the British Empire (Welch, 2015). Similar struggles are examined in Montreal, where *La-Prison-des-Patriotes* narrates the rebellions against British ruler in the 1830s. Returning to the southern cone, controversies over fiscal crises as perpetuated by proponents of the Chicago School of Economics (i.e., Los Chicago Boys) are examined in the context of military dictatorships and their reliance on political imprisonment as well as a methodical disappearance of the “subversive” population. The chapter ends by drawing attention to the economic transformations in South Africa that favor wealthy institutions in a post-apartheid society.

The repression that became part and parcel of the last dictatorship in Argentina went beyond political and financial restructuring. As will be shown in chapter 6, the junta harbored elements of a conservative Catholicism that condoned the scapegoating of civilians as well as activist religious workers, tarring them as “subversive.” In Chile, by contrast, the Catholic Church took a very different stance, even confronting the Pinochet regime through legal action. To decipher all of this, I will examine historical developments in Montreal during the rebellions of 1837 and 1838 as well as in Belfast during the more contemporary Troubles. The chapter exposes how those events determined *how* political imprisonment would be administered—as well as resisted. This interpretation anticipates a cultural sociology dealing with the sacred and the profane (Smith, 1999; 2008).

In chapter 7, the last in “Part Two: Diagrams of Control,” I unpack the many ways in which architecture itself has shaped political imprisonment. In Victorian times, the British built their prisons along the lines of a panopticon, thus injecting geometry into prisoner control, as so clearly illustrated at the Kilmainham Gaol (Dublin), the Crumlin Road Gaol (Belfast), and the Women’s Jail (Johannesburg). Parallel architectural innovations were built into other institutions holding political prisoners in Seoul and Montevideo; the repurposing of Chile’s National Stadium (Santiago) in wake of the 1973 coup serves as another example. The chapter explains how the dictatorships in the southern cone performed power by establishing a society of spectacles fastened to an economy of looks and looking. By doing so, authorities directed citizens to internalize the gaze of their repressors.

Much of this book focuses on how sites of political imprisonment are culturally repurposed, yet it is also important to examine other forms of transformation. The third set of chapters sheds crucial light on the “Technologies of Power.” Chapter 8 theorizes on tactics of censorship and propaganda aimed at transforming the mind; accordingly it highlights the significance of Goffmanesque inquiry. Such dramaturgy in the southern cone underscores the various performances embodied in authoritarian regimes, which go to great lengths to mystify their atrocities. Censorship and propaganda also became tools of the British authorities in Northern Ireland. During the Troubles, state-controlled media were carefully managed by then-Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and her cabinet. As a countermove,



Irish Republicans launched a public relations campaign to expose the inhumanity of political imprisonment. This publicity was carefully tailored for a sympathetic audience at the local and international levels.

Another technology of power is torture, a brutal method of transforming the body. Chapter 9 considers Foucault's notion of the body as the ultimate material seized by all political, economic, and penal institutions (see Garland, 1990). Former detention centers in the southern cone not only memorialize the victims of repression but also offer detailed lessons on the legacies of mistreatment. Likewise in Northern Ireland, controversies over the "five techniques" (or "deep interrogation") inflicted on political prisoners continue to spark social activism. To provide some theoretical grounding, the discussion blends Foucauldian perspectives on power, technology, and the body. As a method of critique, the chapter introduces the idea of "Foucault's Museum" in which former penal institutions serve as sites for progressive commentary that condemn human rights abuses (see Lord, 2006).

In the final installment on the technologies of power, chapter 10 outlines ambitious plans to transform entire societies through extermination. Genocide and denial are mutually reinforcing. A case in point is the extermination of the indigenous people of the southern cone, which even today is dismissed by a litany of denials. Similarly, the death flights conducted by the Argentine military were justified as "humane" acts of elimination. Likewise, in Chile, the Caravan of Death and Operation Colombo carried out by Pinochet's dictatorship also have been defended by those holding a nationalist identity. As a socio-historical backdrop, this chapter's discussion addresses themes of fascism, given that many Nazi war criminals fled to Latin America and once there were granted safe haven from post-war tribunals. Apparently, Baudrillard's (1994) warning—that forgetting the extermination is part of the extermination—was disregarded in the southern cone. There, military officers both embraced and denied their own participation in genocide. The chapter also deliberates on the unfolding controversy over the children born in captivity. At ESMA, the notorious detention, torture, and extermination center, infants were confiscated from their mothers, who were then murdered by the junta. Without their knowledge, those children were raised by other families under an illegal adoption program coordinated by the last dictatorship.

"Performing Memory" is played out in Part Three, in which Durkheimian thought continues to guide a sociological interpretation. In chapter 11, concepts related to the sacred and the profane are again interpreted through the prism of consecration and desecration (see Smith, 2008). The sanctity of death is contemplated at the Kilmainham Gaol and throughout a network of heritage sites in Dublin, where socio-religious rituals uphold the demand for proper memorialization (Welch, 2016a). Yet such sanctity is culturally contested in Belfast as partisan memories continue to clash in the collective consciousness. Memory of the 1981 hunger strike at the Maze prison hardens the ethnic and political divide. Bobby Sands and the nine other political prisoners are mourned as martyrs by the Republican

community but scorned by Loyalists. In the southern cone, the sacred is ritualized to consecrate the victims of mass murder by the dictatorships, a heinous act of profanity and desecration. In that context, interpretation relies on the afterlives of sites to translate the quasi-spiritual foundation of political confinement.

The concluding chapter returns to the power of place and the performance of memory. In Buenos Aires, shaming repressors has become a brash form of activism. In what they call *escraches*, the grown children of the disappeared publicly humiliate former military officers complicit in the last dictatorship. As a collective, they use profane acts of street theatre to dispense their version of justice (Kaiser, 2002, 2020). Returning to Belfast, the city contains places of memory as well as places of resistance. In several museums devoted to Irish Republicanism, well-chosen images and objects are displayed as part of a ritual of resistance. Political posters, in particular, are a significant source for symbolic campaigns, becoming institutionalized within a partisan heritage. Reproducing themes of ascent, political prisoners in Belfast are celebrated for their daring escapes. Those prisoners have become legendary, even larger than life. The book concludes with some afterthoughts on the cultural afterlives of the sites and symbols of political imprisonment.

#### CAPTURING THE BASTILLE EFFECT

So we have lots of places to go to, lots of things to look at, and lots of ideas to think about. But let's not lose track of the significance of transforming sites of political imprisonment. Toward that end, my project begins with a basic question. What historical and cultural effect did the storming of the Bastille have on other places where political prisoners were confined?

Upon exploring those sites, I found a great deal of intriguing symbolism that narrates particular struggles. What I conceptualize as the Bastille Effect has emerged in various cities but under very different circumstances. However, what many of those transformed sites seem to share is a critique on justice as it prevails over injustice. Indeed, a dual transformation is evident in the manner in which sites are purified of their profane past as they cease to function as places of confinement. In the process, the site's place identity is reconfigured into a sacred space that invites visitors to reflect on the atrocities that occurred there. Those former prisons and detention centers also become metaphors for progressive social change in post-conflict societies whether in Northern Ireland, the southern cone of the Latin America, or elsewhere. To capture the Bastille Effect, the forthcoming chapters invite us to remain mindful of how these symbolic sites enter into the collective consciousness, promoting a greater awareness of human rights as a theme of ascent.