Latin American Identity in Online Cultural Production
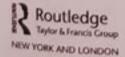
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the new media technologies to circumvent traditional channels of communication and power structures.

One particular way in which this model of the 'lettered city' is at once invoked and yet revised is through the constant referencing of both works to offline place. As the analysis in this chapter will reveal, the geographical tropes upon which these websites rely are both reinforced and transformed by their use online; if, as we discussed in our introduction, online practices entail not the loss of locatedness, but a reworking of the concept of locatedness, then these websites make use of the potential of the internet to force a rethinking of place and territory. This chapter argues that, just as the Madres' original conception of the Plaza de Mayo is predicated on the resignification of this space, following this logic, the internet may be seen to provide a further—and in some cases, more radical—opportunity for reterritorialisation and the recuperation of place. The processes of de- and reterritorialisation enabled by the advent of new media technologies thus do not function merely to further the interests of global informational capitalism but offer a potential space for tactical resistance. In this way, the analysis in this chapter engages with, but also contests, Deleuze and Guattari's theories of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation. Deleuze and Guattari argued that capitalism, being based on social abstraction, involves deterritorialisation, and at the same time establishes 'factitious and artificial reterritorializations' which function 'in its own service' (Deleuze and Guattari 1977:303). Pace Deleuze and Guatarri, this chapter argues that the sites under analysis here are examples of what we could term *resistant* reterritorialisation, enabled by new media technologies, meaning that reterritorialisation online does not of necessity function in the service of capitalism, but instead, that tactical reterritorialisations via on- and offline practice may offer contestatory approaches which attempt to critique capitalism's logic. These potentially resistant reterritorialisations are undertaken through the tactical and resistant way in which Latin American online works engage with the productive tensions between online representations and offline places. As this chapter argues, rather than online cultural practice entailing the erasure of place-based concerns, instead, the way is open for new associations of place and for new formulations of territorial identity. In this regard, the works in this chapter are examined as examples of the creation of urban representations which function at the interface between the real and the virtual, and make tactical use of the tensions and interstices between these two realms.

RECONFIGURING THE CENTRIC: MARINA ZERBARINI'S *TEJIDO DE MEMORIA*

The Argentine digital artist and scholar Marina Zerbarini has been involved in research in art and technology since the mid-1990s, as well as developing her own multimedia and net.art works, many of which are hosted on her

website. Her online works to date include the hypertext narrative *Eveline, fragmentos de una respuesta* [*Eveline, Fragments of a Reply*] (2004), which is created from an aleatory and interactive combination of fragments from the James Joyce short story, 'Eveline' (1914), remixed with photographic images, videos, animations and sound files. Her net.art work, *Gemelos* [*Twins*] (2005) takes the form of an interactive game, involving a mix of sound files, texts and images taken from the web which are then incorporated by the user to create the effect of a 'Torre de Babel' ['Tower of Babel'] (Zerbarini 2005:76). More recently, her 'narrativa no lineal para internet' ['non-linear internet narrative'] *La borra* [*Sediment*] (2009) involves the creation of a narrative based on photographs of coffee grounds taken daily, combined with a text extracted from horoscope predictions on the internet, and a map image drawn from Google Earth, along with short comments by the author. In all of these cases, as with Zerbarini's other pieces, her works are characterised by the remixing of existing sources, the constant movement across multiple media (text, sound, still image and moving image), the refusal to abide by conventional teleological narrative structure, and the access to the work via a nonintuitive interface.[3]

This chapter focuses on her 2003 work, *Tejido de memoria*, an interactive online work which dialogues explicitly with the Madres de Plaza de Mayo, and engages in an active reworking of the Buenos Aires cityscape. Presented as part of the *Women: Memory of Repression in Argentina* exhibition of 2003 and curated by the artist and activist Raquel Partnoy, *Tejido de memoria* is Zerbarini's most explicitly political work to date. In Partnoy's vision, as explained in her curatorial statement, if the military 'wanted us to forget', art has the potential to preserve what happened in the past (Partnoy 2004:2), and the works selected for this exhibition, including Zerbarini's, all speak to this underlying impulse of recovering (memories of) the past. That said, *Tejido de memoria*, as will be analysed below, undertakes a critique of Argentina's recent past but also directs its critique at its present inequalities, and, at the same time, problematises any easy access to the straightforward recovery of memory. As with the other works included in this exhibition, along with the curatorial interface itself, *Tejido de memoria*'s engagement with this 'memory of repression' is closely tied to the representation of the cityscape itself.[4]

An introductory gloss before we enter the work proper defines *Tejido* as a 'work in progress', since, due to the incorporation of user comments, the content of the site is constantly in flux, and identifies the themes of 'human rights, poverty and social-memory inequality' (Zerbarini 2003) as central to the work. Zerbarini then goes on to define the notion of 'tejido de memoria', stating that a memory can be read as a 'weave that constructs and reconstructs' the present in relation to the past (Zerbarini 2003). This notion of 'tejido', which is reflected in the title of the work itself, creates the image of memory as text(ile), as weaving, and as an active construction of resistance. The associations between weaving and memory are long-standing both in a

wider Western tradition, and in the Southern Cone of Latin America more specifically. Regarding the first of these, James Olney, in his seminal volume on the construction of memory, has noted that weaving has long been a 'characteristic metaphor for the operation of memory' at least as far back as the writings of Augustine. Olney argues that such a conception of memory as weaving means that:

> unlike the archaeological dig, the weaver's shuttle and loom constantly produce new and different patterns, designs and forms, and if the operation of memory is, like weaving, not archaeological but processual, then it will bring forth ever different memorial configurations.
>
> (Olney 1998:20)

Zerbarini's work engages with these processes identified by Olney, since her *Tejido de memoria* is involved in the construction of (contestatory) memorial configurations, and thus concurs with this conception of memory as processual. In this sense, Zerbarini's work indicates, as will be analysed below, that there is no straightforward, transparent access to the recovery of a simple, singular memory, and instead produces a complex process by which the viewer/user must engage in the active production of memory.

In a more culturally specific context, the image of weaving as (resistant) memory evokes, of course, the *arpillera* [tapestry weaving] movement of neighbouring Chile, which grew as a response to that country's experience of military dictatorship under the Pinochet regime of 1973–1990. From the movement's early inception in 1974, the act of weaving *arpilleras*, as well as the images they depict—scenes depicting the struggles of human rights activists, or images of the disappeared—represented resistance to a (patriarchal) dictatorship. In the words of Marjorie Agosín, whose volume *Tapestries of Hope*, now in its second edition, still remains the most authoritative on the genre, the *arpillera* is an 'amalgam of voices and histories' and functions as a 'story of memory' (Agosín 2008:15–16) commemorating the lives of the disappeared. In this image of the *arpillera*, then, close connections between textuality, fabric, commemoration, and gendered resistance are combined, connections which are undoubtedly evoked by Zerbarini's use of the term 'tejido'.

Moreover, Zerbarini's emphasis on memory, and on its construal as an active, constructive, textual-weaving process, is central to many Argentine cultural works of the postdictatorship era, from literature and cinema to performance art. Early films such as Luis Puenzo's *La historia oficial* [*The Official Story*] (1985) pitted a personalised quest for memory against an official historical rhetoric, while more recent projects have problematised existing models of memory recuperation, such as the *escraches* of the H.I.J.O.S.[5] in which protest, ceremony, street theatre and music combine to bring into public memory the human rights abusers of the Guerra Sucia [Dirty War] (1976–1983).[6] In these and many other similar works, the question of social

memory, its recuperation, and its relevance to the present has been a constant in contemporary Argentine culture. Moreover, if, in recent cultural production such as Albertina Carri's *Los rubios* [The Blonds] (2003) and Luis César D'Angiolillo's *Potestad* (2002), a problematisation of existing models of memory recuperation is undertaken, Zerbarini's work, in which the recuperation of memory is never straightforward, linear, nor transparent, speaks to this recent trend.[7]

After Zerbarini's introduction to *Tejido*, we then enter the work proper. The main page has the same black-and-white image repeated several times in a mosaic format: a photograph of the interior of a building, with bare walls, concrete columns and high windows [Fig. 2.1]. The architecture, and the grey-scale, grainy quality of the image, recall images of the clandestine detention centres that were established during the Argentine dictatorship and which were responsible for the disappearance, torture and murder of an estimated 30,000 people.[8] While not overtly identified, the image bears striking resemblances to photographs of the ESMA (Escuela Superior de Mecánica de la Armada [Naval Mechanical School]) in Buenos Aires, the most notorious of the regime's torture centres where an estimated 5,000 people were detained, tortured and killed.[9] Given its notoriety and the frequency with which it is cited in survivors' testimonies, the ESMA has become a particularly emotive symbol in the Argentine national imaginary; as Di Paolantonio has argued, 'ESMA is vested with a particular memorial charge, which is fraught with complex and often contesting attempts to give representational content to the past victimization' (Di Paolantonio 2008:26). This image is therefore a politically and emotionally laden one, which, given its repetition in mosaic pattern across the screen, pervades this work. Significantly, clicking anywhere in the bottom third of the screen causes this background to scroll over to another screen, but it transpires that, whether we scroll left or right, we still end up with the same background image: all screens have in effect the same background, only with slightly different tones, ranging across grey, blue, beige and red. This repeated background suggests the omnipresence of the detention centres, and the lingering memory of them in the Argentine national imaginary and in the Buenos Aires cityscape.

The top left-hand corner of the site carries a date, which rapidly and constantly scrolls forward, from 1977 to the present day (2003, at the time the work was produced), and then restarts at 1977. Again, this scrolling date hints at an obsessive return to the past: 1977 is of course one year after the installation of the dictatorship, but also, more important in the context of this net.art work, the year of the establishment of the Madres de Plaza de Mayo. Meanwhile, 2003, as well as being the date of production of *Tejido*, is also the year in which then president Néstor Kirchner made the first steps towards the repealing of the Ley de obediencia debida [Due obedience law] and the Ley de punto final [Full stop law], and thus is a significant date as regards bringing the perpetrators of the crimes of the dictatorship to justice.[10] The scrolling date thus is doubly encoded; firstly,

it serves as a reminder of past traumas which are constantly reemerging in the present, and how the logic of the dictatorship still impinges upon the present day—a feature we see explored throughout this work. Secondly, it functions as a commemoration of the setting up of the Madres association, and indicates how this association still has relevance in present day, postdictatorship Argentina, a fact which, again, is constantly enacted throughout *Tejido de memoria*.

In addition to the date, there are several named links, and other unnamed links, all of which are hidden in the visuals and link to the main content of the work. This content takes the form of video files, still photographs, texts, graphs, and user input, making this a fully multimedia work, in which the various materials are interwoven to produce an oppositional commentary on past and present Buenos Aires. In terms of how this content is navigated, the use of unnamed links, of icons which are constantly fluctuating, and the fact that the mouse cursor disappears at periodic intervals, making the user's navigation of the site frustrating and faltering, are all examples of the way in which this work recreates the sensation of disappearance, and of the need to search out the hidden meanings.

In the links themselves, there is a frequency of references—textual, visual, aural, statistical—to the city of Buenos Aires, as well as a repeated use of materials pertaining to the Madres de Plaza de Mayo in particular. Moreover, in addition to the use of historical sources (including, although not limited to, information from and about the Madres), there are also numerous statistics about contemporary poverty and inequality in Buenos Aires. The sources used in this work thus function to refocus the city and to contest the established meanings of the Buenos Aires cityscape from a dual perspective: from an engagement with historical sources which draw out the traumas of the dictatorship which still inhabit the modern city; and from an engagement with contemporary sources which underscore the inequalities still plaguing twenty-first-century Buenos Aires, as will be analysed below.

Regarding firstly the use of still images in this work, these are set on a rolling cycle, and appear in the bottom third of the screen, thus drawing our attention to this conventionally subordinate zone of screen space. The images are organised into three groups, and combine iconic views and monuments of Buenos Aires with oppositional images which contest the accepted meaning of the cityscape. In the first group of images, the rolling cycle starts with an archetypal image of modern Buenos Aires: a panoramic shot of the Buenos Aires waterfront with the skyscrapers of the Puerto Madero district reflected in the Río de la Plata [Fig. 2.2]. The image of the port has long functioned as a shorthand for Buenos Aires itself, with the term for the city's inhabitants—*porteños*—reflecting this elision, and the notion of the 'port city' representing Buenos Aires's much-vaunted cosmopolitan outlook and history of mass immigration.[11] The particular image here—the modern Puerto Madero district—reflects that district's regeneration following huge injections of foreign investment in the 1990s, in which finance and

communications companies, among others, were relocated there. Yet the image we see is not the conventional tourist image, and indeed is one we would be unable to see in real life, for it is a mirror image, composed of a single shot of one part of the Puerto Madero district which is then doubled upon itself. After this image of the city, we then get brief glimpses of the following images which flash over it quickly before disappearing: an extreme close-up shot of a humanoid face with red eyes; a black-and-white photograph of a fountain; an image of several bald, alien-like figures supporting large spheres; and a black-and-white photograph of a person pedaling a bicycle cart.

These various images, set in the context of the main Puerto Madero image which frames them, function to contest the accepted meanings of the cityscape. The fountain, for instance, is the fountain located in the Plaza de Mayo, seen in this image with the Banco de la Nación Argentina and other government buildings visible in the background. The image is seen only fleetingly, as it moves swiftly up the screen before fading out, but even from this brief glance it is clear that the image has been altered, since the water in the fountain appears to run pink. Establishing a metonymical link to the preceding image of the face with red eyes, and to the subsequent image of alien bodies, this image functions as a commentary on both the dictatorship and on the contemporary neoliberal era in Argentina. The location of the fountain—the Plaza de Mayo—is clearly a highly charged setting in terms of the Guerra Sucia, and the pink water suggests the blood of those who were tortured and disappeared by the regime. At the same time, the perspective of the photograph, with the banking corporation in the background (rather than, for instance, the more expected tourist shot with the *Casa Rosada* presidential palace in the background) functions as a critique of finance capitalism as well as, or in place of, a critique of the earlier dictatorship. In this way, this image provides an implicit critique of the panoramic shot of the Puerto Madero district which serves as its backdrop: if Puerto Madero, as Pedro Pírez has argued, is one instance of the increasing fragmentation of Buenos Aires due to privatisation (Pírez 2002), then the image of the bleeding fountain with the major financial corporation in the background serves as an image of finance capitalism bleeding the country dry. The conjunction of these images thus establishes a link between the two regimes: between the human rights abuses of the dictatorship, and between the social stratification enacted by the neoliberal reforms of the Menem era and which continues up to the present day.[12]

The figure with the bicycle cart, meanwhile, while ostensibly providing a traditional image of the street vendors of Buenos Aires, is, in postcrash Argentina,[13] a much more highly charged image. The image of the street vendor/recycler with bicycle cart has become synonymous with the *cartoneros*,[14] the many thousands of people who, as a result of the crash in 2001 (and the preceding years of *menemista* privatisation and neoliberal policy which paved the way for the crash), were forced to make a living sorting

through the rubbish of the wealthier areas of the city.[15] The image is thus emblematic of the harshness of life for many in modern Buenos Aires, and comments upon the neoliberal and privatisation policies of the Menem and post-Menem years which forced many to make their living in the grey economy and which saw an increase in inequality in Argentina. Again, the significance of this image as set against the backdrop of the Puerto Madero waterfront is paramount: if the official meaning of the Puerto Madero is of the triumph of privatisation and the insertion of Buenos Aires into global circuits of finance capital, then the image of the *cartonero* which fleetingly moves across it represents the rising inequalities and social stratification which these same policies of privatisation would disavow. In this way if, as Themis Chronopoulos has put it, 'the presence of *cartoneros* is one of the most visible and lasting effects of the 2001–2002 economic crisis of Argentina' (Chronopoulos 2006:167), then *Tejido de memoria* works to make tactical use of this visibility, resignifying the streets, and making visible the *cartoneros* over the official images of the cityscape.

These various images, and the way in which they are remixed, thus function to contest the accepted meanings of the Buenos Aires cityscape, and to resignify monumental space. If monumental spaces such as the Plaza de Mayo intend to signify a particular national discourse—in this case, celebrating the May Revolution of 1810 which ultimately led to Argentina's independence from Spain in 1816—then Zerbarini's net.art work aims to reappropriate this space, as the Plaza de Mayo is made to signify differently. In this tactic, *Tejido de memoria* continues the impetus behind much of the offline movements based in and around the Plaza de Mayo. The Madres de Plaza de Mayo were involved in the creation of alternative 'emotional geographies' (Bosco 2006:343); the *Siluetazo* movement of 1983 attempted the 'appropriation of the centric' (Longoni 2007:181) and the 'aesthetic capture' of the Plaza de Mayo (Amigo, cited in Longoni);[16] the Grupo Arte Callejero involved the creation of an 'alternative map of Argentina's socio-historical space' (Taylor, D. 2006:71); the *escraches* and other protests of the H.I.J.O.S were an attempt at a 'metaphorical repossession of the streets' (Kaiser 2002:504) and the 'politiciz[ation] of the neighbourhood' (Benegas 2011:27). In all of these cases, attempts at the resignification of the cityscape underpin the protest and the production of memory, a tactic which is continued by *Tejido de memoria*. *Tejido de memoria*, thus, with its focus on the resignification of social space, fits into a trajectory of other, recent social and cultural movements in Argentina which have insisted on linking this recuperation of memory closely to issues of location and space.

Yet, where *Tejido de memoria* differs, of course, is in the fact that this work is hosted online; whereas the other movements mentioned above all involved the physical presence of protestors, actors, signposts or images in the Plaza de Mayo or in the streets of Buenos Aires, *Tejido de memoria* attempts to negotiate the cityspace and resignify it from an alternative locus: that of the internet. That is not to say, however, that *Tejido de memoria* is

not located or embedded; rather, that it offers new sites of resistance which traverse real and virtual space. Indeed, we may argue, following Bosco's argument about the Madres' relationship to city space, that online space may prove a particularly fruitful and challenging site from which to contest the established meanings of the city. Bosco, in his 2006 article on the Madres' place-based practice, has argued that:

> When the emotional is incorporated into an understanding of embeddedness, the spatiality of social cohesion becomes more dynamic. Embeddedness does not necessarily remain dependent on relations of physical geographic proximity or on a locality, as it is typically assumed but, rather, evolves into a geographically flexible process that embraces a relational understanding of place. However, place still matters in a relational understanding of embededdness.
>
> (Bosco 2006:343)

Drawing on what Bosco argues here, we would argue that *Tejido de memoria*, as a web-based work, engages in precisely this 'relational understanding of embeddedness': relational, because it is not physically located in Euclidean space, yet embedded because *Tejido*'s commentary is embedded in the specificities of the Buenos Aires cityscape.

Similarly, a second group of rolling images provides contestations to the conventional meanings of the Buenos Aires cityscape. Here, we see a sepia photograph depicting the docks with a sailboat in the foreground, representing Buenos Aires's heritage and its heyday in the nineteenth century as a city built on immigration. This is followed by a modern photograph of the city, showing a building site with a crane, representing the boom in construction in the Puerto Madero zone under Menem, and then a romanticised photograph of Buenos Aires steeped in mist. These three initial photographs function as establishing shots of the traditional images of Buenos Aires, only to have three further images fade in, fleetingly, over them: a photograph of two men, with their hands on their heads; a photograph of a large line of people being rounded up, again with their hands on their heads; and a third photograph, in black and white, showing a large multitude of people grouped in front of a docking ship. These latter three images zoom in and then fade out so quickly we can hardly discern the exact figures they represent before they disappear again, and thus function as representatives of the shadowy figures haunting Buenos Aires. The first two of these, clearly referencing oppression and detention of civilians by the stances of the figures, finds its counterpart in the third, where the lack of specificity means the image could reference voluntary immigration rather than exile, although the location at the dockside is clear. The specific confluence of these images is significant, since the conjunction of the riverside with the brief superimposition of the images of *detenidos* ['detainees'] recalls the fact that during the dictatorship many of the *desaparecidos* ['disappeared'] were thrown to their deaths from the infamous 'death flights'. In this barbaric practice, victims

of torture were drugged and, still alive, pushed out of planes into the Río de la Plata, their bodies to be found some hours or days later washed up on its shores.[17] This rolling cycle of images thus enacts a dynamics of trauma, where the shadowy, fleeting bodies of these barely glimpsed images come to haunt the images of the city and of the Río de la Plata in particular. This, one could argue, is an example of the 'hauntology' of Argentina, of which Diana Taylor has spoken (Taylor 1997:31), in which 'the *desaparecidos*, the ghosts of the forever missing, haunt the Argentine political scene' (Taylor 1997:142). The sequence of images presented in *Tejido* provides one such instance of 'performative hauntings' (Taylor 1997:31), in its cyclical, constantly repeated, image-scape of the shadowy, barely visible bodies which move across the cityscape.

The still photographs thus establish this work as one which will question the accepted meanings of the Buenos Aires cityscape, and attempt to give voice to the experiences which are disavowed in official discourse (whether this discourse be of the military regime, or of the neoliberal policies of the 1990s and 2000s). The other sources and links within the work also engage in this process: the video files, for example, provide the most explicit links within *Tejido* to the work of the Madres, as well as providing for alternative perspectives on the cityscape. Here, there are various links at the right-hand side of the screens which open up short films, some of which are artistic or fictional works, and others which are extracts of interviews with María del Carmen de Berrocal, one of the founding members of the Madres, and subsequently a member of the committee of the Asociación Madres de Plaza de Mayo.[18] These videos are organised into four groups, corresponding to each of the four different screens to which we can scroll. Of these groups, the one set on the blue-tone background is particularly revealing. Here, we are given three videos, the first two of which are excerpts of interviews with Berrocal, and the last a short fictional montage.

The first video, subtitled 'Inicios de la asociación' ['Beginnings of the association'] gives a brief introduction to the Madres, with Berrocal reaffirming the term 'locas' ['madwomen'] as a term of resistance. This appellation, given to the mothers by the military regime, was, in the words of Marguerite Guzmán Bouvard, intended to 'undermine their credibility in the public's eyes, and to keep them in their places—that is, marginal and invisible' (Guzmán Bouvard 1994:244). Here, Berrocal states that the Madres were, indeed, 'locas' in their decision to protest in the Plaza de Mayo, but reframes this as a positive stance of resistance, since they were 'locas de amor' ['mad with love'] for their disappeared children. Her affirmations here reveal the affective geographies drawn by the Madres in the Plaza, and set their protests against the discourse of violence perpetrated by the regime. The second video, subtitled 'Objetivos' ['Aims'], has Berrocal giving both the initial aims of the Madres—to find the disappeared children, and to have them recognised not as terrorists but as revolutionaries—and also the subsequent aims—of carrying on the fight for human rights that was started by their children. This is representative of the *Asociación*'s aims,

postdictatorship, of standing up for human rights more broadly, as well as providing a fitting description of the way in which *Tejido* itself works, in its dual focus on the horrors of the past, and the inequalities of the present.

Finally the third video, a short artistic film rather than documentary footage, is composed of a montage sequence which cuts from a woman knitting, to a close-up of her hands, then to a still photograph of a face, over which a target is then superimposed, and finally cuts back to the close-up of the hands knitting again. The photograph of the face, in a passport-style format like those used by the Madres in their protests, represents the disappeared, while the imposition of the target over it, leaving the photograph itself mostly obscured, represents the military dictatorship obliterating identity and disappearing the person. The sequence of the woman knitting which frames this photographic still is a gendered image, recalling the mythical figure of Penelope, whose weavings of a shroud by day, and undoings of it by night enabled her to weave her own destiny. The implication in this montage is that women, through weaving (that is, through the resistant, processual construction of memory), bring to light the fate of the *desaparecidos*. Moreover, the notion of recuperating a socially sanctioned, gendered role (knitting/weaving) for oppositional purposes reflects the tactics of the Madres themselves, with their recuperation of the role of motherhood in order to oppose the regime and to demand justice. As scholars have noted, the Madres' tactic of assuming the appellation 'madres'—one of the conventional gendered roles for women within nationalistic discourse—in order to contest power involved a tactical use of that sanctioned role for oppositional ends. In this regard, Guzmán Bouvard has commented that the Madres 'while retaining the traditional expectations of femininity, such as motherhood, [. . .] have also transformed them by refusing to support a destructive nationalism' (Guzmán Bouvard 1994:188). In this way, the image of the female weaver in this video functions as a figure of agency and of the construction of resistant memory.

Furthermore, it is significant to note that the figure of Penelope, and the image of weaving more broadly, has also been championed recently as a metaphor for a gendered, resistant online practice. On weaving, theorists such as Sadie Plant have posited links between weaving and cyberfeminist practice (Plant 1999). On Penelope specifically, Plate has argued that she stands as a 'trope for digital textuality', representing women's negotiation of 'the current global medial ecology, with orality, print, and digital texts all concurrently present yet moving at different paces and in different spheres'. The loom thus functions as a metaphor for her subjectivity which is 'nomadic and shifting' (Plate 2007:52). If such are the connotations of weaving and new media technologies, then the image of knitting/weaving here can be understood as an image of the creation of resistant memory through digital media. Seen in conjunction with the Berrocal videos, and understood in the context of the work as a whole, this short montage thus functions to visualise the notion of 'tejido de memoria' which informs this work: essentially,

the knitting represents the *tejido*, while the face represents the *memoria* of the disappeared. The imagery functions as a synecdoche for *Tejido de memoria* as a whole: to weave together images, videos, texts and user input to create a *tejido de memoria* in a gendered and resistant way. Thus in this sequence, as in the four other video sequences, through the interspersion of interview footage with art work, of documentary with fiction, there is an attempt to weave an alternative narrative of the Plaza de Mayo, and to bring forth the memory of those who were disappeared.

The sequences of still photographs and video files as discussed so far are supported by a further, unnamed section of the work in which eighteen individual documents—some text, some graphic and some photographic— provide supplementary information about the dictatorship, the Madres and contemporary inequality in Argentina. These are accessed via a series of icons at the left-hand side of the screen, icons which include a cassette tape, a CD, a clipboard, a document and recycling bin, and which reference both predigital, analogue formats (the cassette, the clipboard), as well as digital ones, again suggesting equivalences between earlier forms of government (the dictatorship) and present ones (the informational capitalism of the Menem and post-Menem era). These icons constantly fluctuate, flickering on and off, and, regardless of whichever is clicked, bring up the same image: a chess board with icons of people rather than chess pieces. Clicking on each individual person brings up a different document: these range from graphs and tables covering statistics on infant mortality, maternal mortality rates, poverty and unemployment in Buenos Aires; texts about the dictatorship and contemporary issues such as poverty and malnutrition in Argentina; and two photographic images.

Again, as with the rest of *Tejido de memoria*, the constituent documents in this section function collaboratively, such that the information included in one link resonates with statements or images given in another. For instance, one of the photographic images depicts a young woman holding a baby, with numbers and prices in white font superimposed over the black-and-white image. The significance of the image—perhaps somewhat opaque when seen in isolation—is drawn out as the user peruses the other files making up this section. For example, reading this image alongside the communiqué of the Madres which sets out their fight for the rights of political prisoners encourages us to view this picture as representing a *desaparecida* with her young child. Conversely, if we access this image directly after reading the graph entitled 'distribución de la mortalidad infantil argentina 1999' ['distribution of infant mortality in Argentina, 1999'], we may interpret this image as representing infant mortality, with the superimposed figures and prices representing the numbers of children who have died as a result of the inequalities caused by contemporary neoliberal policies in Argentina. The way in which these files are structured, and the fact that we jump from one to the other like figures across a chess board, rather than accessing them in sequential fashion, encourage us to make these and other connections as we read.

Similarly, another of the text files, entitled 'Un día después del Día de la Madre' ['The Day after Mother's Day'], is a short text by the Asociación Madres de Plaza de Mayo, originally published in 1996, and combines the memory of the dictatorship with a critique of contemporary capitalism, stating that 'el Día de la Madre la inventaron los comerciantes, pero nosotras, la Asociación Madres de la Plaza de Mayo, le dimos a la palabra "madre" un sentido especial' ['Mother's Day was invented by shopkeepers, but we, the Asociación Madres de Plaza de Mayo, have given the word "mother" a special meaning']. This text, when seen in the context of the graph showing the 'índice de la pobreza e indigencia' ['rates of poverty and destitution'] in Buenos Aires, reads as a critique of consumerism, and encourages the reader to establish links between such consumerism and the social inequalities it brings with it. Or, for instance, the text file entitled 'El trebol de cuatro hojas de las madres' ['The Madres' four-leafed clover'], a short journalistic piece about the Madres painting images of flowers on cards in November as a protest, resonates with *Tejido de memoria* itself as a work of protest art. In summary, this section provides many of the hard facts which will inform our understanding of the rest of the site, but is not without its own artistic merit since it is in its mixing of factual data with photographic images, and of historical sources with contemporary statistics in the form of a resistant and quasi-aleatory mash-up, that the section encourages us the users to make connections between the various sources, and to develop a critical understanding of the inequalities that they highlight.

Three further, unnamed sections of *Tejido* lie towards the top right-hand corner of three of the four screens, where four coloured bars each link to a different source. One set of these four bars links to files including two photographs, a text, and a scrolling series of quotations with images. Again, the lack of explicit guidance through these four sources encourages the user to establish links between them, and to develop a critical understanding of Buenos Aires's cityscape. For instance, one of the scrolling quotations—'la memoria es redundante: repite los símbolos para que la ciudad pueda existir' ['memory is repetitive: it repeats symbols so that the city can exist']—is an unacknowledged citation from Italo Calvino's novel *Le città invisibile* [*The Invisible Cities*] of 1972 (Calvino 1974:19). Calvino's novel, with its envisioning of new ways to approach the city, has frequently been the subject of attention by scholars and theorists researching the urban landscape, including Ángel Rama himself, who saw *Invisible Cities* as a work that encourages us to rethink social relations and the cityscape (cited in Franco 2002:191). With regard to the specific quotation used by Zerbarini, David Clarke and Marcus Doel, in their work on the cityscape in film, have illustrated how this statement, acknowledging the role of memory in sculpting the city, involves 'bringing questions of memory to bear on contemporary urban experience' (Clarke and Doel 2007:599). If this is the implication of the Calvino quote, the other sources which can be accessed alongside it shed light upon it, and enact the notion of 'bringing memory to bear' on the specifics of the Buenos

Aires cityscape. The short text, for example, explains why the Plaza de Mayo was a significant location for the Madres, and provides a particularly illuminating take on the Calvino quote: it is precisely due to the Madres' insistence on 'bringing memory to bear' on the Plaza de Mayo that a new, contestatory meaning of the city is produced. Similarly, another of the links brings up a black-and-white photograph of a protest march by the Madres, depicting protesters carrying a banner demanding '¿dónde están los centena-res de bebés nacidos en cautiverio?' ['where are the hundreds of babies born in captivity?'], a reference to those children born to women held in torture and detention centres, and who were subsequently taken away from their mothers.[19] Fleetingly, below this image, the phrase 'el 2 de agosto de 2003 se anulan las leyes de punto final y obediencia debida' ['on 2 August 2003 the full stop law and due obedience law were repealed'] appears. Again, this image of the Madres occupying and resignifying the cityspace, in conjunc-tion with a reminder that the two laws giving military personnel exemption from prosecution have now been repealed, visualises Calvino's statement about memory and the city: the repealing of the laws will allow the recu-peration of memory, a memory which, through the actions of the Madres, is closely linked to the fabric of the Buenos Aires cityscape itself.

If the still images, video files, graphs and texts interweave a variety of sources in order to contest established meanings of the cityscape, another section of the work, entitled 'Comunicación' opens up a further space for the integration of new sources through the opportunity for interactivity. In this section, users are invited to add their comments to the site, which can then be accessed under the section 'Escritos' ['Writings'] (see below). User input is enabled through the completion of three screens where users have to input their data according to a preestablished format: firstly, by entering the name they want to use; secondly, by defining themselves in one word; then thirdly by setting down what they want to denounce, with the preprogrammed format starting, 'denuncia . . . ' ['denounces']. The instructions on each screen are given in the informal *vos* format, the interface has a human name ('Valen-tina'), and the use of a keyword is explained as a way in which Valentina/the interface can 'conocerte mejor' ['get to know you better'], all of which create a sense of intimacy, and again engage in the creation of affective geographies. Moreover, the experience being recreated here, with the highly charged word-ing beginning 'denuncia . . . ' has immediate resonances with the work of the Madres, whose first steps in the initial stages of the movement were to 'denunciar la desaparición' ['denounce the disappearance'] of their children and to petition for *habeas corpus*, the legal writ which allows a person to seek relief from unlawful detention.[20] The site thus recreates the actions of the Madres in their denouncement of the disappearances, while also allowing users to denounce contemporary injustices, since users are free to insert their own demands in the space provided. The emphasis on user interaction here is, thus, not to generate ludic pleasure as we will see in the works to be analysed in Chapter Three of this volume, but for the purpose of denouncing injustice.

The user input thus generated can then be viewed in the 'Escraró' section of *Tejido de memoria*, which is accessed via a link in the left-hand top corner of the screen. Each following the same format ('name, definition, description [...]'), user input here ranges from reflections on the past, to criticism of the present world order, including poverty, inequality, George W. Bush's presidency and the IMF. Statements here commenting on the 'memoria silenciosa' and the 'imágenes borrosas, opacadas pero nunca olvidada...' ['silent memory'; 'images that are blurred, opaque, but never forgotten'] speak to the dynamics of *Tejido de memoria* in its retrieval of the shadowy memory of the *desaparecidos*. Similarly, the affirmation of another user that it is necessary to link memories of the past to 'el presente' ['the present'] brings together the discussion of past crimes and contemporary injustice. These various entries, conceived of not as user comments on *Tejido*, but as integral parts of the work itself, provide illuminating insights into the issues that *Tejido* raises, although, given the low-tech interface by which the entries can be uploaded (restricted to text-only), the overall effect is less visually stimulating than other sections of the work.

As this analysis has shown, *Tejido de memoria* is a complex work whose principal aim is to contest urban space from the very centre itself. By means of giving prominence to the subterranean, shadowy figures hidden under the city centre, and by providing new interpretations of the centric, *Tejido de memoria* resignifies urban space. The cityscape is renegotiated and contested via the multiple audio, visual, textual and statistical sources which compete and clash together to form this work, placing the user in an active role of rethinking the conventional representations of the city. In this way, Zerbarini's work provides us with a resistant, complex work which invites us to renegotiate the traditional 'lettered city' from an explicitly gendered, resistant perspective.

BLOGGING FROM THE MARGINS: *HIPERBARRIO* AND REPRESENTATIONS OF THE *COMUNAS*

Whereas the focus of *Tejido de memoria* was on subterranean, gendered forms of contestation hidden within the very centre of the city and of political power itself, the focus of the next case study in this chapter, the *Hiperbarrio* website, is on the mobilisation of subaltern voices from the margins of the city (both literally and figuratively).[21] *Hiperbarrio* is a project which brings together digital communities in working-class *barrios* of Medellín, Colombia's second-largest city, centred in particular around the *barrio* San Javier de la Loma, in the San Cristóbal *corregimiento* [district], some 11 kilometres to the north-west of the city centre. Given that Medellín has been described as 'a study in socio-economic contrasts' (Roldán 2003:163) due to the stark division between the wealth of its business district and the poor, precarious settlements on the slopes of the hillsides surrounding the city,