

Gabriel Drozdov

Prof. Brewer Ball

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### Nothing Disappears

Diana Taylor's "You are Here: H.I.J.O.S and the DNA of Performance" details the belligerent political demonstrations by the relatives of the "disappeared" in Argentina. The H.I.J.O.S, or "the children of the disappeared" (161), survive their lost fathers and mothers, of which some thirty thousand were "tortured and murdered" by the depraved Argentinian government (169). Through their demonstrations, the children of the disappeared attempt to raise awareness of the government's crimes, as well as propagate a larger national movement through performative memetics.

To explain memetics, we can observe the ethereal quality of theater. With the advent of digital video, we now film more plays but we do so imperfectly, since film removes the physicality of each performance. The original runs of a play are closer to Richard Dawkins' definition of "memes," which are cultural relics that only survive when reproduced and reinvigorated, however that may be (173). While we never perform a play under the exact same context twice, the play mutates and adapts to the needs of another cultural generation through future renditions of the relatively same script. Meanwhile, we can classify these flat tapings as genetic relics, which can be seen as a kind of "proof" or "evidence of existence" (176). Genetics alone may seem to lack the spirit of live performance but they serve as the DNA, adapting and changing in the hands of the needy and able. The original space and time is absent from the recording, as it is in the script, but we can reuse the core ideas under new initiatives.

"The King is dead, long live the King."

The DNA of performance is a mix of memetics and genetics through *surrogation*, in which we embody, as a surrogate, previous ideas with a new or mutated purpose. Taylor defines the “king” as “a continuous role that endures regardless of the many individuals who might come to occupy the throne” (174). We have *our* King, and more will come, but the histories of past kings are “susceptible to corruption and decay” (173). In our example of filmed theater, you may think that we made the performances permanent, but a performance is a physical thing that cannot be replicated. What remains is a recording, our “king” in this case, accompanied by a script. No matter how many technological advancements we make to improve our methods of preservation, we cannot relive the space and time of past events. The king is dead, and yet here is the next king.

In Argentina, the H.I.J.O.S, Abuelas, and Madres use memetics to spread awareness about the disappeared. Through demonstrations, Argentinians hope to inspire future demonstrations, which in turn creates a persevering loop of remembrance. We can observe the evolving aspect of memetics at play, as the current generation is perhaps the only one with direct losses related to the Dirty War, since the demonstrators are the direct grandmothers, mothers, and children of the disappeared (168-9). Additionally, the current generation of protestors has access to primary documents, namely photographs, that prove the existences of the disappeared (176). Demonstrators can protest by just possessing these images, and Taylor compares photography to DNA, stating, “The images function as markers, identifying an entire movement” (177). Thus, we can observe that the founding genetics of the memetic movement are these images and documents, whether they be licenses, passports, or anything of the sort.

The H.I.J.O.S, Abuelas, and Madres use site-specific demonstrations to directly implicate members of the Argentinian society, and urge other members to join the cause. During the H.I.J.O.S “escraches,” or “public acts of shaming,” the children of the disappeared prepare a location by informing individuals of their proximity to former torturers, who are often neighbors of the

individuals. Additionally, the H.I.J.O.S combine the skills of “activist artists” in order to raise awareness about war crimes through street signs and other posters. Some messages are jarring: “‘You are here’ —five hundred meters from a concentration camp” (163-4). Similarly, Griselda Gambaro’s *Information for Foreigners* uses site-specific theater to physically force its audience into the trauma. Gambaro’s play focuses on the same Argentinian political genocide, although the play delves more into the lives of the *desaparecidos* instead of those they left behind. In *Information for Foreigners*, a tour guide directs different groups through a basement series of twenty scenes that depict torture and abuse, which include verbatim excerpts from newspapers detailing the disappearances of individuals. By removing the fourth wall, Gambaro implies that the audience is not removed from the horrors they are witnessing. The audience is an immediate witness to the genocide, just as Argentinians are immediate witnesses.

Although Internet memes juxtapose the Dirty War in tone, they best demonstrate the effectiveness of memetics. The Internet allows for the immediate spread of images and videos, which most often contain basic jokes that resonate with individuals across the world. Internet memes spread so ferociously that websites such as Facebook, BuzzFeed, and Reddit are essentially funded in ad revenue by the resultant page views. With the upcoming US presidential election, supporters of each candidate are using memes to spread bites of easily-translatable content, which in turn reaches thousands of people. The political nature of memes is underdeveloped, but it is extremely effective, as demonstrated on Reddit where the community in support of Donald Trump dominates the website’s front page almost constantly. Other sites, like Facebook, are more heavily dominated by videos and images in support of Hilary Clinton. Regardless of the cause, memes are an effective method of spreading awareness, as memes’ high rate of translatability makes them instantly heard. While the Argentinian memetic movement is more localized, its purpose is just as effective, only relegated to the relevant crowd. The message is simple and powerful: *You are here*.