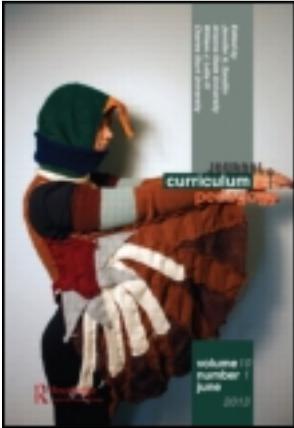


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Cathlin Goulding^a, Mia Walter^a & Daniel Friedrich^a

^a Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, New York, USA
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Pedagogy, Torture, and Exhibition: A Curricular Palimpsest

CATHLIN GOULDING, MIA WALTER, and DANIEL FRIEDRICH

Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, New York, USA

In this article the authors focus on three sites in different areas of the world that share the characteristic of having been schools, prisons, concentration camps, and, in two cases, museums, sometimes in that order and on all occasions with periods of overlapping functions. The main goal of the authors will be to explore the questions that emerge when understanding those sites as curricular palimpsests; that is, as sites on which the inscription and re-inscription of seemingly disparate projects throughout a short period of time leave traces that mark the non-erasure of the past, pointing to connections that until now had remained invisible. Argentina, Haiti, and Cambodia: school, camp, and museum, three sites and three ways of teaching, three curricula and a spatial-temporal palimpsest that speaks to us about learning through the body. These sites make visible a different kind of knowing, one that cannot be erased and that is inscribed in blood as much as in ink and text.

INTRODUCTION

Ever since Foucault's works began circulating in the field of education, transforming the ways in which schools and curricula were thought about, there have been numerous studies juxtaposing educational institutions against prisons in order to point at their similarities and the relationship between the Panopticon and disciplinary societies. Schools, prisons, factories, camps, and other institutions became models through which power dynamics and the production of subjectivities could be grasped. However, whereas the structures and reasoning embedded in those institutions could be superimposed, each one of them has kept its specificities, as schools, prisons, or factories

Address correspondence to Dr. Daniel S. Friedrich, Teachers College, Curriculum & Teaching, 525 W 120th, Box 31, New York, NY 10027. E-mail: friedrich@tc.edu

aim at shaping a particular aspect of the modern subject through technologies and strategies that are, for the most part, differentiated.

In this article, we will examine three sites that share the characteristic of having been schools, prisons, concentration camps and, in two cases, museums, sometimes in that order and on occasion having periods of overlapping functions. The sites are (1) Escuela Superior de Mecánica de la Armada (ESMA) in Buenos Aires, Argentina; (2) Tuol Sleng Prison in Phnom Penh, Cambodia; and (3) Fort Dimanche in Port au Prince, Haiti. We seek to explore the issues that emerge when understanding those sites as curricular palimpsests; that is, as sites on which the inscription and re-inscription of seemingly disparate projects throughout a short period of time leave traces that mark the non-erasure of the past, pointing to connections that until now had remained invisible. By delving into these issues, we pursue two main objectives: (1) to investigate tensions between stability and instability expressed in the school-prison-museum triangle; and (2) to explore the governance of the violent past as embodied by the sites, and consider—through a spatial, temporal, and pedagogical analysis—the messages the sites communicate about who can belong and participate as a citizen.

The first aim is concerned with how the palimpsest, the visible traces of a building's previous functions or uses, conveys a tension between security and chaos at the three sites. The transition of the sites from prison to school or, conversely, school to prison, or the co-existence of those functions, suggests to us how security and order are established and then destabilized, destroyed, or reformed.

Our second aim is to examine how the sites relay messages about citizenship and belonging through their transitions, physical morphings, and strategic curations of the past. For instance, all three sites, which once acted as mechanisms of sovereign power and brute force, eventually came to manage populations and bodies via a strategic shaping of historical understandings. Traces of the brute force used at the sites—and the eventual translation of such violence into the “curriculum” of the museum (Ellsworth, 2002)—indicate what it means to be a knower of the past and to belong and participate as citizens living in the present. The governing of that “today” which emerges in these sites is an attempt to govern one's own past in order to learn from it and thus guide thought and action toward a more predictable, ordered future.

In order to respond to the two aforementioned aims, we describe each site's transitions, pointing out salient examples of the physical and psychic traces left as the sites altered their functions. Next, we analyze the palimpsests that emerged from our analysis of the sites, mobilizing Foucault's work through an examination of the layerings of different modes of power and their deployment through pedagogy, spatial and material arrangements, and time. To this end, the palimpsests we analyze are: a *spatial* palimpsest, a *temporal* palimpsest, and a *pedagogical* palimpsest. The *spatial* palimpsest

examines the overlays of the sites' architectures, the vantage points allowed by each, and how such architectures act as disciplinary zones, allowing for particular distributions of power and knowledge among a citizenry. The *temporal* palimpsest explores how understandings of the past are intertwined with the production of the citizenry; specifically this section looks at management and overlays of historical narratives, such that the past becomes a secure "place of experience" and the future a "horizon of expectations" (Jelin, 2003). The *pedagogical* palimpsest describes the multiple layers of pedagogy within the sites, and how such pedagogies permit and produce conditions for certain kinds of knowledge and understandings of the past. Finally, in accordance to our thesis, we comment on the significance such palimpsests have for the production of the citizen and suggest the implications of our analysis for contemporary curricular discourses.

Additionally, our analysis of the sites as a kind of curriculum of the past through museums and immersive spatial and aesthetic experiences draws from previous scholarship on public pedagogy (e.g., Ellsworth, 2002, 2005; Lehrer, Milton, & Patterson, 2011; Sandlin & Milam, 2008; Sandlin, O'Malley, & Burdick, 2011; Sandlin, Schultz, & Burdick, 2010) or informal, "anomalous" (Ellsworth, 2005) spaces of learning that "exist on the periphery of what is commonly considered educational research in order to see learning that goes beyond or transcends more traditional views of education and schooling" (Sandlin et al., 2010, p. 4). Lastly, we attempt to make sense of the ways in which a diverse array of social issues—such as a traumatic past, a burning rod on bare skin, the need to draw moral lessons from absolute horror—become pedagogized, as they are turned into part of the curriculum in the construction of the democratic citizen.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SITES

One of the sites we will examine will be the ESMA—the Navy's School of Mechanical Engineering in Buenos Aires, Argentina. ESMA is a 36-acre estate in one of the city's wealthiest neighborhoods, located on one of the most heavily traversed avenues. The site simultaneously functioned during the last dictatorship (1976–1983) as a school, where teenagers and young adults from all over the country learned the trades of the navy in a well-reputed institution, and as the largest urban concentration camp in the nation, a place where approximately 5,000 people were savagely tortured and murdered and only about 200 were eventually liberated. After the military regime ended, ESMA continued functioning as a school until it was vacated by the end of the 1990s. Following some struggles, control of the site was granted to Human Rights NGOs in 2004 and the camp was converted into a Museo de la Memoria (Museum of Memory; alternatively called Espacio para la Memoria, or the Space for Memory), while some of the surrounding

buildings in the estate currently host the National Memory Archive containing documents related to “the disappeared” and the search for their missing children, social justice art galleries, and workshops. During the dictatorship, the physical overlap of school/camp was accompanied by a curricular overlap, as some students served as guards for the illegal detainees, participated in torture sessions, and even bonded with some of the disappeared (Friedrich, 2011).

A second site we will examine is Fort Dimanche, which is situated in the outskirts of Haiti’s capital of Port au Prince. During the dictatorial regimes of Francois and Jean Claude Duvalier (1957–1986), an estimated 20,000–30,000 Haitians were killed. Thousands among those targeted were tortured and killed at Fort Dimanche, which was the most infamous of the three prison camps that made up Le Triangle de la Mort (The Triangle of Death). Following the fall of Jean-Claude Duvalier, former victims of the oppressive regime fought to transform Fort Dimanche into a memorial museum. Just four months after the museum opened its doors, the forces that led the 1991 Aristide coup converted the structure into a temporary armory. After years of neglect, the site was once again made into a prison in the mid-1990s. However, rather than contain political dissidents, this new incarnation of Fort Dimanche operated temporarily as a children’s prison before being once again abandoned. Over the past decade, internally displaced Haitians slowly appropriated the site and renamed it Village Demokrasi (Democracy Village). While thousands of Haitians live on the grounds of the former prison camp, one section of the site is of particular interest to this article: On the second floor of the main building, the 10’ × 12’ concrete cells that were once crammed with as many as 46 prisoners are now used as classrooms for students attending École de la Saline, a volunteer-run school.

Finally, the third site investigated in this article is the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Tuol Sleng, or S-21, was a secret imprisonment and torture center in the Khmer Rouge era (1975–1979). During this time, Cambodia was forcibly returned to an agrarian, Marxist-Leninist state in which education, money, religion, and class divides were violently dismantled and two million members of the population perished. Long before its existence as a prison, Tuol Sleng was a Cambodian high school: three stories high, with classroom doors and windows opening out to a grassy courtyard. An estimated 14,000 men, women, and children accused of offenses against Pol Pot’s regime were imprisoned at the site and later transported to and killed in nearby killing fields. The facility was liberated by invading Vietnamese troops in January, 1979 (Chandler, 1999). Upon liberation, soldiers discovered only a handful of survivors but found thousands of records, confessions, and mug-shot-style photographs of prisoners. A few months after its liberation, Tuol Sleng was transformed into a museum by Mai Lam, a Vietnamese army official who had previous experience establishing war crime museums in Vietnam (Chandler, 1999). During the first year of

its operation as a museum, the site was banned for Cambodian visitors and was utilized as evidence to foreign journalists and visitors of the atrocities committed by Khmer Rouge regime. In 1980, the museum was opened to Cambodian visitors, who often came to the site in order to find information on missing family members and friends (Chandler, 1999).

TRANSITIONS AND THE PALIMPSEST

The widespread practice of palimpsesting can be traced back to texts from the 7th to 9th centuries, when scholars and liturgists—lacking new sources of writing materials—erased ink from papyrus and vellum pages and inscribed new, overlaid texts. Later, archivists would resurrect classical texts that were obscured under layers of newer texts, first by using rudimentary techniques like light and magnification and later through the sophisticated use of chemicals and infrared light to render the various layers legible (Dillon, 2007). While its Latin origins (*palin*, again, and *pse*, rubbed smooth) suggest that palimpsesting is chiefly concerned with materiality and “paleographic oddities” (Dillon, p. 1), the employment of more figurative meanings of palimpsest have been taken up in readings of city spaces and buildings, among other scholarly fields (see e.g., Huyssen, 2003). The palimpsest, from our perspective, is not only overlays generated by construction, destruction, and re-purposing of architectures; rather, we are also interested in the historical markers and meanings generated through the partial visibility of the sites’ previous functions and existences. McDonagh (2005) noted that the palimpsest “both erases and retains the past [and] disrupts a sense of temporality; and the kind of history facilitated by its retentive function is at once restorative and violating” (cited in Tavin, p. 6).

The palimpsesting of school, prison, and museum at ESMA, Fort Dimanche, and Toul Sleng is characterized by such competing forces of restoration/security and violation made possible by the retention, partial erasure, and seepage of physical structures and artifacts. That is to say, the transitions and overlays between school, prison, and museum are coherent and “sensible” while also rupturing conventional understandings of the uses and purposes of a school. The use of classrooms for prison cells, for example, is confounding as much as it is seemingly logical—classrooms make for good cells because rooms are closed off from one another, sharing the inspiration in traditional Panopticon models (Foucault, 1979). However, the facile transformation of school to prison, and prison to school, lies not only in the shared physical structures of prisons and schools but also in their common purposes of shaping persons through production of specific knowledge and bodies. Such institutions are “ordered by knowledge” (Hirst, 1994, p. 360)

and are structured and routinized—both in their physical plants and the intellectual, psychic, and often violent workings on beings (Foucault, 1979)—in ways that isolate and individuate so that “controls can be brought to bear and can effect the work of the transformation/construction of subjects” (Hirst, p. 360).

In their current states, as museums in the case of Argentina and Cambodia, and as a school at Fort Dimache, the traces of the sites’ previous functions are embedded into the physical structures to haunting, destabilizing effects. Within these sites “strong marks of present space merge in the imaginary with traces of the past, erasures, losses, and heterotopias” (Huysen, 2003, p. 7). For instance, the building at Fort Dimanche has not changed—save for a few crumbling walls—and the rooms maintain many of their original characteristics. The concrete walls that frame the rooms are bare, but flaking paint and a few markings left by museum curators remain. In the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, the school building was altered by prison workers to make cleaning more efficient. Judy Ledgerwood (2002), an archivist at the museum during its early years, observed:

On the stairway landings, for example, holes have been knocked in the wall so the stairs could be cleaned by sloshing water down the staircases. Below each of these openings on the building exteriors one can still see stains of the blood that ran down the sides, as though the buildings themselves had bled. (p. 104)

In addition to traces of blood and marks of physical harm done to prisoners that remain at Tuol Sleng, photographs of prisoners comprise one of the major exhibits. The effect of the display, with its multiple rows of photographs capturing gazes of delirious, dazed, and disoriented prisoners, is specter-like. Visitors’ movements within the space of the museum are followed by multiple eyes and faces; the photos are not only the final traces of life before death but also a “replay of the power of panoptic vision to inculcate fear and social control” (Williams, 2004, p. 244). The palimpsests of violence that remain at the sites are destabilizing forces exerted on visitors, acting as a reinstatement of the terror and control that occurred within the sites’ former functions and uses.

Meanwhile, the managers of ESMA in Argentina decided to leave the space empty as they received it from the military, instead of reproducing it as it once was. Every room of the museum has nothing but small diagrams and quotes from survivors describing how the space was used during the dictatorship. The traces, though, are in the specters that inhabit the place, recalled by the stories told by the tour guides and the very memories of the visitors and the histories they carry with them. Thus, even when there is an attempt not to re-present horror, the visible representations still show “residues of the invisible” (Huysen, 2003, p. 10).



FIGURE 1 Palimpsest No. 1 (color figure available online).

SPATIAL PALIMPSEST

Fort Dimanche, ESMA, and Tuol Sleng maintain much of their original architecture, and the overlapping functions of the spaces—to restrain, protect, and organize—unsettle the visitor. Yet, the starkly ordered layout of the sites implies a certain rationality to this destabilization.

Aside from the subdivision of classrooms into cells at Tuol Sleng, the framework of each of the three sites remains mostly unchanged. Fort Dimanche’s imposing concrete and brick two-story building is still divided into a series of 3-meter by 3-meter barracks, connected by narrow corridors. Steel bars still line the first floor windows, but the concrete blocks that once plugged the second story windows have since been removed. Cells that were packed with as many as 40 political dissidents line the hallways.

The ordered, rational layouts of the three sites are what Pugliese (2008) refers to as “grids of transparency and visibility” which “ensure[d] that the incarcerated subject [was] the target of both internal and external systems of violence” (p. 213). The visible manifestations of power led to forms of self-discipline, as prisoners were forced to meticulously maintain their spaces in order to retain some sense of order and control.

While the cells at Fort Dimanche have since been converted into classrooms, the architectural layout of the site has not changed, and the rooms maintain many of their original characteristics. The unprotected electric bulbs

that once decorated the ceilings of the cells are long gone. They would be of little use anyway, because there is no electricity in the building. The austerity of the school and prison allow for “the geographical thinning out of events to create an emptiable and impersonal spatial surface to contain, classify and organize human actions” (Sack 1986, as cited in Philo, 2001, p. 480). Now, neat rows of a dozen uniformed female students have replaced the 40 adult prisoners who once crammed the cells. Like those before them, the students have been sorted and partitioned within a series of three meter by three meter rooms, to allow for the ordering and close surveillance of their activities. This starkness misleadingly evokes supreme neutrality: devoid of overt personality, the identical, bare, concrete cells assume an authoritarian rationality, an unquestionable truth.

The classrooms of Tuol Sleng are just as ordered as those at Fort Dimanche, yet many were partitioned to account for prisoners during the Khmer Rouge: smaller quarters meant for increased control and ease of torture. Despite these changes, the site is neither entirely prison nor school. Lim (2010) explains: “an unknowing visitor would expect boisterous schoolchildren to suddenly erupt from the classrooms” (par. 11). The rationalist architecture of the school, the building’s tight relationship between form and function, is reflected in the flat roof, the stairwells at each side of the building for easy access, the long corridors that afford a pathway to multiple classrooms, and the equilibrium of buildings around a single courtyard (“Rationalist Architecture,” 2005). This rationality, writes Lim, was “brought to excess in the rational transformation of the school into a disciplinary zone of torture and extermination” (par. 13).

The austerity of ESMA is meant to have the opposite effect. Museum curators left the site mostly bare, so as to not impose a particular interpretation of history. Yet, the order and starkness of the site instead lends ESMA a similar rationality, evoking grandiosity by way of its architectural magnitude that seems to reflect not only on the enormousness of the killing machine, but also on the omnipresence of absence. The “empty” rooms, inhabited only by the specters of history, mirror an absence of bodies and of frameworks, while at the same time pointing to the very concrete spaces where a “disappearance of presence” took place. The unquestionable truth that ESMA seems to present to visitors is the impossibility of coming to terms with absence.

The vantage point of École de la Saline in Haiti further prioritizes the perspective of the self-subjugating student. The classrooms of the school, which are on the second floor of the site, have large and completely unobstructed windows. The cement blocks that once plugged the window frames have been long since removed, allowing expansive views of the area surrounding the site. Ruins of toppled buildings, garbage, and the shanties of the displaced can be seen for miles. Fort Dimanche, which has become a haven for the students and other residents, is the only solid structure in sight. The

century-old concrete and brick building not only withstood the earthquake in 2010, it is a leading symbol of the authoritative Duvalier regime. From its second floor window and through the double lens of prison–school, Haiti’s unrest becomes spectacle. The uprooted Haitians living in the shadows of Fort Dimanche become the “antithesis of honest citizens” (Malakki, as cited in Alonso, 1994, p. 395). The displaced become conflated with the violence and unrest that plagues the nation, and thus represent the larger, imagined criminal “other.” In this sense, the disorder and instability of the displaced Haitians living in Democracy Village, when contrasted with the security and order of the school and school building, intensifies the feelings of insecurity and the desire for order. Out of these fears arise the desires for authoritative laws. The students, who find safety from the violent unrest and uncertainty in the authority of Knowledge and Truth, couple rationality with stability and strength.

Unlike Fort Dimanche, which was infamous during the Duvalier reign, Tuol Sleng was a secret prison camp. Because it was not known publicly as a prison—let alone a torture camp—the building did not serve to educate the broader Cambodian population during the Khmer Rouge. Yet, as a museum, it continues to teach visitors about the excluded and the state’s need for exclusions (Aretxaga, 2003). Surrounding the schoolyard, there is barbed wire fencing and the front of the school has a large metal gate. The wooden shuttered windows of the classrooms have bars on them. In the courtyard, former playground equipment has been converted into a gallows-like structure used to torture prisoners. This coexistence of prison and school architectures, as well as their overt processes of both exclusion and inclusion, allow for the “spectacular promotion of issues classified under the ‘law and order’” (Bauman, 1998, p. 116).

TEMPORAL PALIMPSEST

The prominence of ESMA, Fort Dimanche, and Tuol Sleng extends not only spatially but also temporally. This physicality and durability lend the sites a particular historical authority within the structure of collective remembering, each anchoring the meaning of the past both in the present and in relation to a secure and hopeful future (Jelin, 2003). Through this remembering, present insecurities and concerns are constrained. Consider, for instance, Haiti’s Fort Dimanche. Already a highly insecure country, Haiti was hit with a 7.1 magnitude earthquake in January 2010 which destroyed much of the country’s infrastructure and left more than a million people homeless (Dreyfuss, 2011). Since the earthquake, there has been a stark rise in violence, rendering increasingly large segments of the population vulnerable (Thompson, 2011).

This insecurity has led to an increased nostalgia for former dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier, who returned from exile in January 2011, one year after



FIGURE 2 Palimpsest No. 2 (color figure available online).

the earthquake. With violence and natural disasters rupturing, or perhaps temporarily displacing, the state's governing apparatuses, Haiti's homeless yearn for more than physical shelter—they are increasingly nostalgic for the more elusive “home” of their “secure” past. Duvalier's nostalgics view his heavy-handed rule as one of order and predictability.

While the building's permanence is illusory, the mere fact that Fort Dimanche—a symbol of Duvalier's rule—was one of the rare buildings to survive the earthquake reinforces the dictator's legacy, thus legitimating a version of Haitian history in which a powerful state meant security and stability. Even the students at *École de la Saline* speak positively of Duvalier. In an interview with *New York Times* journalist Ginger Thompson (2011), one student told the reporter “My father told me that when Duvalier was here, it was easy to find food” (par. 32). Another chimed in, “And if you crossed him, he used the baton. It's true that Duvalier used the club to push a political agenda, but now we have gangs killing people, and we don't know why” (par. 33). The endurance of Fort Dimanche pulls Haitians to the past for answers to their heightened instability, and the site's current incarnation as a place of instruction legitimates the need for a strong state.

While Argentina's ESMA and Cambodia's Tuol Sleng do not evoke the same nostalgia as Haiti's Fort Dimanche, the sites still re-order history, as they strive to stabilize the present and prepare for the future. Through the narratives of tour guides and the displays of torture, the sites invite the visitors

to re-work and re-master the states' and their own histories so that the future is seen as one of security and progress. With ESMA and Tuol Sleng, this means simplifying otherwise complex memories into a lesson for the present and the future. While the museums at these sites present past atrocities in starkly differing ways—the former with very little visuals, and the latter with a surfeit of graphic images—both display the past as something “other,” as something which happened and which exists in the present in the form of a lesson. They both attempt to historicize the past, to delineate “yesterday” from “today” and—even more starkly—“yesterday” from “tomorrow.” This clear demarcation allows for both digestible lessons on what it means to be a good citizen, as well as operating as a blueprint for progress.

In the case of ESMA, the openness of the museum hints at the possibility of multiple interpretations. However, the signs and the narration of the tour guides narrow the “correct” interpretations of the dictatorship to one in which there were clear heroes and villains, and one in which rebellion was always possible. The initial implication of multiple interpretations, followed by gentle coercion of the tour guides points to the anxiety inherent in the uncertainty about the future, as well as the pedagogical desire to tame this anxiety. At Cambodia’s Tuol Sleng, the grotesque, archaic displays of torture are such that they are incompatible with progress. Thus, visitors can easily address the Cambodian history as “the past.” These efforts to temporally categorize the atrocities of the Argentine dictatorship and the Khmer Rouge highlight a pervasive longing for a secure, stable, and manageable present and future.

THE PEDAGOGICAL PALIMPSEST

The pedagogical palimpsest is concerned with how the layering of school, prison, and museum provides instruction about the “correct” relationships of a citizenry to their troubled pasts. Here we look at the figures of teacher and interrogator that operated interchangeably throughout the histories of the three sites; specifically, how teacher–interrogators operate as conduits for knowledge, suggesting uneasy shifts between brute force and the wielding of disciplinary power via the institution of school. The hybrid figure of teacher-interrogator, then, embodies both the orderly and efficient and the chaotic and violent, intimating that knowledge is produced in “permissible” ways and under authoritarian conditions. Moreover, the placement of a museum space into what was formerly school speaks to a pedagogy of experience and how the very materiality of sites like ESMA, Fort Dimanche, and Toul Sleng act as a kind of curriculum of the past (Ellsworth, 2002, 2005). To this end, we also examine how aesthetic representations at the sites’ museums function as curriculum, one that makes violent histories intelligible and coherent in the service of producing a *reasonable* citizenry.

The Teacher–Interrogator Palimpsest

To interpret the school–prison juxtaposition—through an investigation of some salient parallels between the practices of schools and prisons in Argentina, Cambodia, and Haiti—is to describe the type of education that occurs within each. Within each of these sites, prison guards and interrogators enacted a careful, purposed pedagogy of control, founded on the authority of the teacher and executed through violent, oppressive practices employed to extract confessions from prisoners. Some of these practices included the training of interrogators that happened at both ESMA and S-21 and the forced acquisition of knowledge through writing of prisoner autobiographies and confessions.

Within these prisons, teacher and interrogator had a certain type of resonance, such that skills and techniques of each were fittingly employed for the extraction of knowledge. In torture sessions, like teachers in classrooms, interrogators selected the “program content, and the students (who are not consulted) adapt to it. [The teacher] chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply” (Freire, 1970, p. 73). In the case of S-21 in Cambodia, much of this might be ascribed to the fact that the head of the institution, Kiang Guek Eav (alias Duch), had previously been a high school mathematics teacher known for the exactness of his lectures. Duch was “strict, fastidious, [a] totally dedicated teacher—characteristics that [he] carried with [him] to altered purposes” (Chandler, 1999, p. 20). In one account, a prisoner pleaded with Duch during a torture session, “I would be happy to grow rice with my wife and children on a cooperative. I don’t need an official position . . . please save me, just let me live” (cited in Dunlop, 2005, p. 126). To this, Duch replied “Looking at the problem . . . my understanding is that you haven’t been straight with the Party. What’s your understanding? I ask you to reconsider the problem and resolve it. When we agree, we can work together” (cited in Dunlop, p. 126).

For Duch and other interrogators at our sites of study, torture was a pedagogical act that required a skillful line of questioning, problem posing, and “wait time” to receive the correct answers, which usually required an admission to traitorous crimes. Interrogation was also an intellectual undertaking, one that required mental acuity, skillful use of subtext, and rhetorical adeptness. According to former workers of S-21, Duch “got a perverse thrill from the intellectual toying. He was the teacher. He always won the argument” (cited in Dunlop, p. 126). Such precision and control within violent conditions point toward the permeability between security and chaos, between education as an act of reasoning and intellect and its function as a disciplinary force that produces knowledge and power by taming uncertainty.

At the sites, interrogation was a process in which a teacher-like figure calmly shaped instructional sessions through “promptings” until the “correct” answers were provided in the form of confession. One study-session guide



FIGURE 3 Palimpsest No. 3 (color figure available online).

from S-21 used in the trainings of interrogators gave exact instruction on how to carry out a torture session:

- (1) First, extract information from them.
- (2) Next, assemble as many points as possible to pin them down with and to prevent their getting away.
- (3) Pressure them with political propaganda.
- (4) Press on with questions and insults.
- (5) Torture.
- (6) Review and analyze the answers so as to ask additional questions.
- (7) Review and analyze the answers so as to prepare documents. (cited in Chandler, 1999, p. 82)

Such protocols acted, essentially, as a lesson plan for interrogators, in which information extraction alternated with the infliction of physical pain. The language of the protocol suggests the orderliness and logic of the plan to obtain answers from prisoners as well as the employment of bureaucracy as a mechanism to make torture “lawful” and “rational.” Like students under the instruction of a teacher, prisoners were “transformed into beings of particular type, whose conduct is patterned and governed . . . endowed with definite attributes and abilities” (Hirst, 1994, pp. 360–363). Forced confessions were

painstakingly reviewed for inconsistencies, errors, and marked for areas in which prisoners could be pressed for further inquiry—as an effective teacher might do when reviewing a stack of student papers. Within both the interrogation room and the classroom the “image of the teacher repeats, no matter how dimly, the extremely affect-laden image of the executioner” (Adorno, 1998, p. 183). Through the teacher–interrogator palimpsest, then, acts of pedagogy are often imbued with the affect of violence; interrogators and teachers alike draw upon authority, rationality, and persuasion undergirded by a “dim” subtext of violence and consequence. The interrogation ultimately “produces intrinsic modifications in the person who articulates it; it exonerates, redeems, and purifies him” (Foucault, 1990, p. 69). Confession permits a specific kind of learning, one in which redemption and freedom is possible under conditions of violence and repression.

A Representational Palimpsest

Even after their respective transitions from prisons to museums, torture and violence continued to be, in varied form, pedagogical tools at the sites. In two cases, Argentina and Cambodia, representations and narratives of violence are intended to instruct visitors about the past and the lessons of “never again.” Many of the exhibits on display at the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum consist of the actual torture instruments used within the prison. Such instruments are accompanied by former inmate Vann Nath’s large-scale paintings of emotionless torturers lashing, beating, and dunking agonized prisoners into barrels of water. On another wall of the museum, there is a large map of Cambodia comprised entirely of human skulls, a display originally commissioned by the Vietnamese curator Mai Lam. Red, blood-like streaks are painted across the map to represent the bodies of water and rivers. There is little historical context or explanatory placards that accompany these types of artifacts and representations of violence. Few facts are given on who the perpetrators were, their political beliefs, or how they rose to power. Additionally, there is no identification of those who are in the above-mentioned mug-shot photographs nor are there any stories or biographical narratives offered; consequently, these absences gives way to extremities—to pain, lashings, and blood. The message offered by such extreme representations and embodiments is to enforce on visitors the “historical real,” that such violence happened here and can therefore never occur again. Quite differently in the case of ESMA, where after much public debate, curators elected to make the space one of reflection and emptiness. However, displays of testimonies, stories of resistance of prisoners, for example, are still purposed to give visitors lessons of the past.

Curators of these prisons and camps turned museums in Argentina and Cambodia were left with the question of how to represent the seemingly



FIGURE 4 Palimpsest No. 4 (color figure available online).

unrepresentable, that is, the gruesome acts committed within the sites, for which the frameworks available for our understanding may be insufficient. As a result, there are absences and excesses of representations, an “interplay of enhanced presence and diminished existence” (Rancière, 2007, p. 110). The enhanced presence of the images and exhibitions of torture are juxtaposed against the real, felt absences of the people who suffered and died within the space. A tension arises out this attempt to control the unintelligible through representation, “for rendering what is absent present, and for making a particular adjustment of the relationship between sense and non-sense” (Rancière, p. 137).

Both in Argentina’s ESMA and Cambodia’s Tuol Sleng, the process of memorialization was framed within a Holocaust discourse. Much of the decision making as to the appropriate forms of representation arose from processes of restorative justice that occurred in the wake of the Holocaust. As memorialized within this framework, the past, especially in the example of Cambodia, is presented as a time of chaos and extraordinary instability and, as a result, there is a kind of distancing that is intended to happen between the current state/its citizenry and this violent past. At Tuol Sleng, Mai Lam strategically aligned the cruelties of “Pol Pot and his genocidal clique” (Ledgerwood, 2002, p. 109) to that of the Nazis by giving special attention to the infliction of suffering on the human body via exhibits displayed at the

site. Because the body is the predominant unit of analysis and interpretation, it is the primary lens through which museum visitors understand the experiences of those who were held and worked within the prison. Consequently, there is little room for an engagement with the personal, the biographical, the lived, or even the historical or contextual. Visitors are left with the conundrum of making sense of the violence without the benefit of information or a “pedagogical address” (Ellsworth, 2005) through which to connect to those who were killed at the site. Memorialization, when operating within Holocaust discourses, attempts to stabilize the chaos of past in the service of the state, which relies on “continued production of a coherent memory of the past, that is, of liberation and reconstruction at the hands of a benevolent fraternal state” (Hughes, 2003, p. 26). Therefore, in creating a definitive curriculum of the past, both Tuol Sleng and ESMA are part of an effort to construct a stable, renewed national identity that sheds its violent past.

CONCLUSION

Argentina, Haiti, and Cambodia; school, camp, and museum; three sites and three ways of teaching, three curricula and a spatial-temporal palimpsest that speaks to us about learning through the body. These sites make visible a different kind of knowing, one that cannot be erased and that is inscribed in blood as much as in ink and text. Knowledge about medicine, anatomy, and electrical currents, for instance, is superimposed on the blackboards, corpses, and cells at these three sites, as guided tours through these living cemeteries invoke absent/present ghosts through overlapping temporalities. In the same process, as the citizen is being produced, torture is circularly re-inscribed in the re-presentation of a body that is being known and a knowledge that is embodied.

ESMA, Tuol Sleng, and Fort Dimanche, which housed both the excluded and the included—the prisoner and the student—serve to approximate and distance the good citizen from the bad. At ESMA, the formation of the citizen occurred alongside the exclusion of those who did not fit, while at Tuol Sleng the prisoners took the place of the students, and at Fort Dimanche the students replaced the prisoners. Regardless of the order, the approximation of the excluded and the included teaches the necessity of fear and the very violence embedded in acts of learning.

As visitors enter sites that have been transformed into museums, they themselves are transformed into students, who are there to learn the lessons of the past in order to guide their future thought and action. In the analysis of these three sites, Foucault’s “periods” become entangled; sovereign power, layered upon technologies of the self, layered upon disciplinary power, and a society of control. No one interpretation or tool set is enough, inviting a different kind of mobilization of Foucault’s texts.

The traces the school and violence of the prison left remaining on the sites have, ultimately, a destabilizing effect on their present existence. Visitors, particularly at Tuol Sleng and ESMA, which now are museums, operate within a “force play of remembrance and forgetting, vision and blindness, transparency and opaqueness of the world” (Huysen, 2003, p. 10), such that immersion into the physical and aesthetic space of the site allows for a multiplicity of interpretations and subjectivities that exceed the “official” curriculum offered through curation. The palimpsest of school upon prison upon museum reflects back this “force play of remembrance:” a transparent, coherent move to distance citizens from a violent past in the service of stabilizing the present, but also, we would argue and extend here, an “opaque” pull that may allow a more open-ended experience in which an “historical event has not come to rest” (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 18).

These schools–prisons–museums function, intentionally or de facto, as social archives, in which particular kinds of knowledge is stored for future generations. What is rarely controlled by intention, however, is the kinds of knowledge at stake. While these museums may aim at becoming a clear history lesson, what they cannot account for is their pedagogy about pedagogy, what they teach about schools and knowledge itself. One of schooling’s founding assumptions is grounded on salvation through knowledge and reason. We have schools because we assume that knowledgeable, reasonable subjects will be better than their uneducated counterparts. Yet when we circulate through a school that was turned into a camp or a prison, and was then memorialized, what we are exposed to is knowledge of a different kind, knowledge about the impossibility of seeking salvation in any one specific path. If teachers became torturers, if students became guards, if prisoners became students, if classrooms became cells, if cells became exhibits, if blood became a symbol, then what control do we have over what we can become?

CONTRIBUTORS

Cathlin Goulding is a doctoral student in Curriculum and Teaching at Teachers College, Columbia University. Her research examines curricular efforts in post-conflict settings and teaching and learning within the state of exception.

Mia Walter is a student pursuing her Ed.D. in Curriculum Studies from Teachers College, Columbia University. She is interested in anthropological and philosophical questions around space, architecture, and pedagogy.

Daniel Friedrich is an Assistant Professor of Curriculum and Teaching at Teachers College, Columbia University. His research concerns epistemological and philosophical questions as they relate to the politics of schooling and of teacher education.

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