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Discursive construction of memories of the recent past in Argentine media

Construcción discursiva de memorias del pasado reciente en medios argentinos

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ABSTRACT

Since March 24, 2004 –when the Argentinean President Néstor Kirchner announced the project to transform the Escuela Superior de Mecánica de la Armada (ESMA – Navy Institute of Mechanics) into a Museum of Memory– until March 24, 2008, when the process ended, the universe of media discourses in Argentina showed different performances about the relationship between present memory and the recent past. Memory, in this approach, is configured as a set of effects of sense stemming from the reconstructions of a tragic past. We share the conclusive points of this work, which comparatively analyzes the discourses of the Argentinean national distribution newspaper Página 12 and La Nación, which builds the ESMA event, Center for memory and, from that, produces senses concerning the past of the military.

Keywords: Mythical and historical memory, program component of the discourses, the Argentinean military dictatorship, ESMA; discursive construction.

RESUMEN

Desde el 24 de marzo de 2004, cuando el entonces presidente argentino Néstor Kirchner anunció el proyecto que transformaría al ex centro clandestino de detención de la Escuela Superior de Mecánica de la Armada (ESMA) en un Museo de la Memoria, hasta la finalización de ese proceso, el 24 de marzo de 2008, el universo de discursos mediáticos en Argentina puso en circulación distintas representaciones sobre la relación entre el presente de la memoria y el pasado reciente. La memoria, en esta línea de planteo, se configura como un conjunto de efectos de sentidos a partir de reconstrucciones del pasado trágico. Compartimos los puntos concluyentes de este trabajo, que analiza comparativamente los discursos de los periódicos argentinos de distribución nacional Página 12 y La Nación, que construyen el acontecimiento ESMA, centro para la memoria y, a partir de ello, producen sentidos sobre el pasado de la dictadura militar.

***Palabras clave**: Memoria mítica e histórica, componente programático de los discursos, dictadura militar argentina, ESMA, construcción discursiva.*

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Violence as universal tropos in discourses allows applying the memory of military dictatorships to current specific situations, distant in historical terms and different in political terms in respect to the original event.

Huyssen (2002), p. 18

INTRODUCTION

After 1960, new social movements in the world emerged in search of revisionist representations of the past. The Second World War, as a traumatic event, began to be reconstructed and re-encoded in the media, institutional and political spaces. The discursive constructions of memory were activated, in this case, by the past of repression and secrecy of the Holocaust.

In the same way, the traumatic events of South America, specifically those that occurred during the decade of the 1970s in Argentina, are re-constructed by multiple discourses that either resume or erase the traces of the past.

Frequently, the term *forget* opposes *memory*. This everyday use term is also present in the discursive constructions of media, such as omissions and "attempts to erase the traces of past events and experiences" (Ricoeur, 1999, p. 53). However, discursive constructions regarding memory and forget may be defined as investments of senses that are opposed in its meanings and, at the same time, integrated. Forgetting acts inherently in the narratives because the narrative mode is the result of a selective activity that integrates the forgotten into the work of remembrance.

From this point, the analysis of discursive construction of memory had to maintain the budget that the significant matter cluster lodges traces of a construction that remembers certain past acts at the same time that it forgets others.

On this occasion, the conclusive points of this work are shared, relating to the discursive strategies competing for a privileged place in the democracy of meaning outlays of the recent past. Furthermore, I propose lines of reflection that add to the discussion about the performative character of discourses, place of construction of time and the distance separating the past from the instance of enunciation.

Media discursive strategies are aimed at the construction of memory from the simple ritual repetition, with meaning effects that consist of the closure of the programmatic relationship between the past and the present. It is not about forgetting by suppression, but of reservation, which reiterates or omits denominations of the event with pretenses of truth.

In the current Argentine context, in which human rights policies constitute one of the pillars of media agenda, these productions of consciousness suggests the tragic past is not an object of consummated knowledge, but that, on the contrary, it continues subject to representations built. In that spirit, we propose a comparative analysis of the discourses of the Argentine newspapers of national distribution, *Página 12* [*Page 12*] and *La Nación* [*The Nation*], that build up the event of *ESMA* (Escuela Superior de Mecánica de la Armada [*Navy Mechanics School*]), *"memory center"*, and, from that, produce differentiating meanings over the recent tragic past.

It is necessary to introduce an outline of the institutional profile and history of both newspapers, allowing us an interpretation, approximated for now, of the ideological dimension assignable to both media devices. Two newspapers, two ideological-institutional conditions of production, assume positions with unique discursive strategies and, therefore, come into competition in the dynamic enunciate field.

The *Página 12* newspaper is published since 1987. The political map of the time was being reconfigured. Only three years had elapsed between the new democratic Government and the period of illegal military process. At the time, the military sector retained much of the still-vacant political power in Argentina and the President Raúl Alfonsín represented one of the last bastions of the Radical Civic Union, Democratic Party that would suffer many transformations in the application programs of its ideological platform. In this context, the journalist Jorge Lanata attracted support from Fernando Sokolowicz, member of the Jewish Movement for Human Rights, for the financing of the project of the newspaper. Since its beginnings, *Página 12* oriented its body of news, opinion columns and editorials to a model reader with a vision that we could describe as predominantly *progressive* and, during the government of Carlos Saúl Menem, was critical to the overall program of privatizations of public services and the promotion of debt.

The newspaper *La Nación* was founded in the year 1870. It proceeds, for more than a century, *Página 12*. It has, in relation to the latter, a dissonant orientation

and institutional condition in various points. The first of them is about the positioning built during its trajectory in relation to human rights related issues and social organizations. *La Nación* was not born in a democratic transitional period, as did *Página 12*, but during one dominated by a political culture oriented to discretion and violent displacement of native people. Its founder, the then President Bartolomé Mitre, governed Argentina during years in which the national population saw their access to civil participation restricted and had not won citizenship rights. *La Nación* built an enunciative position identified with the sectors related to the armed forces and agro-exporting business, two actors generally assigned operational mergers in every assault to the democratic regime over Argentine history. On September 7, 1930, referring to the manifesto issued by the *de facto*, President José Uriburu, the headline on its cover said: "Nationwide jubilantly celebrates for the resounding triumph of revolution". On March 24, 1976, when the repressive system of the ESMA was officially functioning, the military Government announced through its pages: "Parliament dissolved; removal of the Supreme Court; political and union action prohibited; President to be timely appointed".

The general *objective* of our research was to analyze and interpret the construction of memories in discourses of both media, comparatively in context of a "light regime"[1] and hegemony due to the official human rights policies. This, through the identification of regular operations of meaning and the allocation of subjetivemas [*subjective expressions*] and designated paradigms.

LITERATURE REVISION

We start from understanding the discourses that pronounce themselves on the recent past, like discursive constructions of memory/ies. The approach of these multiple meanings is found in the theoretical framework in the semiotics' approach to event construction. The contributions of this school of thought identify the media as producers of social reality. "Media create social facts in different ways, so there are models of actuality" (Verón, 1983, p. 5). From this perspective, it is possible to identify present relationships in the discourse in the form of traces of a process. There are "relations between the statement and its externality, what is said is crossed by a social system" (Verón, 1998, p. 149).

Journalistic productions that revolve around the topic *ESMA, "Memory center"*, are found, in terms of Verón, in a determined context that has a necessary relation to it. In this way, grammar production complies to a complex institutional weave with a given discursive economy that analysis must to crystallize in the tissue of speech. Each media produces discourses that construct memories of the last military dictatorship in a singular manner. Elizabeth Jelin, in *Memoria de la represión* [*Memory of repression*] (2001), when referring to the dissimilar forms of discursive construction of memory, locates the past of the military process as those "moments that become present in public rituals, in which different actors choose to express and confront, on the national scene, the meaning that they give to institutional breakdowns" (p. 1).

Verón also studied media discourse, and in his work *Efectos de agenda* [*Agenda effect*] (1999), wich refers to anniversaries, registered two forms of constructing memory. On the one hand, it designates *mythical memory* to the discursive productions that build memory from the ritual repetition of the past. In these cases, newspapers categorize the event without relating it to the present, do not remember past facts, but rather favor the constant return of a story already announced, defined. According to the author, in this discourse grammar production, a pre-built meaning put on by passive subjects of the discourse is enacted. Verón denominates this logic as "de hecho consumado" [*fait accompli*] (p. 130).

To mythical memory, Verón opposes those discursive constructions that categorize the past from the memory as a positive act, a *job*: the discourses that construct meaning in a productive relationship with the present. Historical memory is not limited to a position of a passive agent who repeats meanings already defined, but rather it puts into circulation a past loaded with a meaning to be constructed. To remember and not simply evoke, media reconstruct the past of the dictatorship as the one who demands for political justice. From the memory of the past future actions are programmed (Verón, 1999, p.130).

It is possible to differentiate between social actors in dispute (Catela da Silva, 2005, p. 11)[2] that intervene in this whole discourse, suggesting different meanings to the past. Among them are the media, involved by investing sense and providing representations about it.

The meanings attributed to ESMA by the national government since 2003 redefine it as a symbol of the horror on years of dictatorship, in the framework of a new human rights policy. In the years of the military process, the ESMA worked as the operational axis of a complex clandestine organization. The "ESMA agreement", signed by the national government and the city of Buenos Aires on March 24, 2004, expresses itself about the detention center as a place where "an estimated number of 5,000 men and women of all ages suffered a calvary prior to their death, constituting a tragic symbol of the instauration of the horror" (Boletín Oficial [Official Gazette], Buenos Aires 2004).

Aside from the official rhetoric, however, other positions, other speeches and actors have a place in assigning different meaning to the years of the military process. The newspapers *Página 12* and *La Nación* represent two dissonant constructions of meaning in relation to politics and history, dissonances that had a special focus during the period of publications analyzed here. Between representations of the past of the military dictatorship in the media discourse, it is possible to identify regularities that are sharp oppositions. This study represents a new perspective about the relationship that exists between the discursive constructions of the event *ESMA, "Memory center"*, the meaning effects of memory of the dictatorship and political actions that these discourses articulate.

OUR POSITION IN RELATION TO OTHER STUDIES

It is possible to organize the background of our research in three moments/axes, giving account of discussions and contributions around the relation of meaning between the past of the last dictatorship, justice verdicts' procedures and the production of memory, since the return of democracy in 1983, to the present day.

In a first instance, we located the studies by Jelin (1995), Franco (2011), Crenzel (2011) and Feld (2008), which deal with the processes of democratic transition and the submission of the military personnel to the constitutional system as a condition of production of memories about the recent past in media as well as human rights organizations. In addition, we recognize the contributions of Tabachnyk (2005), and Crenzel (2007), who considered the production of discourses in the trials to the "Juntas de 1985" [*1985 Councils*] and discursive strategies deployed during hearings in relation to the recognition of the report "Nunca Más" [*Never Again*][3].

With the enactment of the laws known as Obediencia Debida [Due Obedience] and Punto Final [Full Stop], and the signing of decrees that pardoned the military judged by Council trials, new horizons of debate were opened. Debates on production of memory and procedures of exclusion and control exerted over the discourse, which pronounce on the past of dictatorship and expectation of justice. Among the authors who inquired in the relations between the past dictatorship and the meanings attributed to justice in this context, include those who analyzed the non-institutional discursive constructions. We found, in this order, studies by Jelin (2003) and Vezzetti (2011). Also, from a series of utterances by repressors linked to the dictatorship, carried out during the year 1995, the studies by Ferrero (1999) and Feld (2001), among others, underline the relevance that acquired by confessions for causes that were closed. The so-called "regrets", Ferrero says, contributed a certain sense of legitimacy to the issuer of the statements, building an individual and argumentative project about the past reality.

Sixteen years from the enactment of the laws of Obediencia Debida and Punto Final, Argentinian adhesion to the Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity, in August 2003, prompted the reopening of trials against oppressors of the last military dictatorship. Enrique Andriotti Romanin (2011) develops its study about the conditions of their realization and their political effects, and Smulovitz and Acuña (1995) introduced the "rhetoric of law" category to indicate the new place as guarantor of rights for citizens that the judicial institution acquires after the decade of the nineties. González Leegstra (2009, 2011) and Vezzetti (2011) analyzed the production of memories that circulate in the context of trials, observing the specificity of the legal truth regime and, in tune with Fabiana Rousseaux (2009), Carlos Gutiérrez and others (2011), approach the conditions of witnesses' testimonies production.

From a perspective whose theoretical and methodological approach understands trials as rites that place regulations on the scene, two studies are highlighted. On the one hand, the one by Ester Kaufman (1990), which analyzes the distribution of the word in the judicial rite in relation to provisions of the legal doctrine and discursive strategies of the various actors in the council trials; and, on the other,

the one by Julieta Mira (2011). The latter addresses, from an ethnographic perspective, the trials carried out since 2006 as ritual performances linked to the emergence of a so-called "legal memory". Likewise, the contributions of the studies by Borrelli and Gonzalez (2012) are noted, as they investigate on the construction of the event of reopening the prosecutions for crimes of the dictatorship in *La Nación* newspaper publications.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS AND CORPUS

The weight of meaning invested by the enunciators from *La Nación* and *Página 12* is crystallized in this research in the light of the defined categories of analysis: (i) the selection and ranking of events related to this tragic past and (ii) the denominative system of objects such as guilt, justice, and the role of victim and victimizer. These are two discursive operations linked to the construction of memory in the newspapers. Both media produce their discourses focusing their perspective on different events, discarding a few settings and favoring others, in different ways. This study makes visible the distance between the systems of representations of two opposite discursive formations.

The techniques for gathering survey data included discourse analysis of cover pages, news and editorials in the newspapers *Página 12* and *La Nación* of the following dates:

- March 25, 2004: on this occasion, the then President Néstor Kirchner held a ceremony at the ESMA, announcing the creation of a Museum of memory.
- October 4, 2007: The newspaper published about the ceremony presided by the then-Minister of Defense, who announced the transference of the building of the ESMA for its conversion to "Espacio Memoria y Derechos Humanos" [Memory and Human Rights].
- November 21, 2007: Act at the ESMA, where the creation of the inter-jurisdictional body that would be in charge of Museum of memory was signed.
- March 20, 2008: Articles in both papers on the continuity of the investigation process of the prefect Febres' death[4].
- March 25, 2008: Publications reconstructed the commemorative events of the previous day. A week earlier, civil officials and employees of the Archivo Nacional de la Memoria [*National Memory Archive*] began to move into the offices of the ESMA.

The process of discursive construction that we have denominated *ESMA, Memory Center*, is identified in utterances that, in a four years span, categorize this event (the transformation of the military administrative building into a memory center) and relate it in specific ways to the facts of the past of the Argentine military dictatorship.

RESULTS

From the analysis of discourse of the articles emerge conclusions about newspaper representations of the last Argentine military dictatorship. Such representations are visible in the categorizations of actors and present events, and the established relationships between them and the tragic past.

A PAST THAT PERSISTS

Utterances of *Página 12* reconstruct the military dictatorship with a discursive strategy that attributed the events of the past a sense of force and built meaning around the tragic past, valuing its role in the context as persistent. The following examples show how:

> "The Campora", with most of the GEN (Generación por la Emancipación Nacional [Generation for National Emancipation]) of the legislator and recovered son Juan Cabandié, lived its first March 24 with a giant flag, masks with the face of Julio López and t-shirts to mark their place in the world. (Martínez, 2008, "Un 24th con dos plazas llenas para no olvidar" [*A 24 with two full parks to not forget*])

> They were tortured, beaten and subjected to implausible harassment. (Abrevaya, 2007, "Para que los argentinos podamos volver a mirarnos a la cara" [*So that Argentines can look each other in the face*])

The thoroughness in the use of proper nouns and the identification of specific places operate categorizing justice as an instance that cannot circumvent the discovered. The argumentative strategy is developed reconnecting events to the identity of the actors. Thus, the repressive past is marked by the presence of repressors and those kidnapped.

> Behind the headboard, a long cloth with the photos of the disappeared was the main banner of the act. María Julia Daroqui stepped next to it. She had a poster with photos of her three brothers, Daniel, Juan Carlos, and Alberto, abducted in 1977. (Anón., 2007, "Profundizar el rescate de la memoria de los años terribles" [*Deepen the rescue of the memory of the terrible years*])

> He recalled his partner from high school, Franca Jarach, who was also kidnapped at the ESMA. (Ginzberg, 2004, "La verdad es la libertad absoluta" [*The truth is absolute freedom*])

All of young people today who were appropriated by the dictatorship. (Ginzberg, 2004, "La verdad es la libertad absoluta" [The truth is absolute freedom]). The in past participle verbs ("appropriated", "kidnapped", "tortured") are conformed in denominations that assume an actor assigned being in charge of the facts. The emphasis on the identification of the *who* of events contributes to assigning responsibilities, which, in the form of complaints, question the actions of Justice. On the other hand, the axiological subjetive extracted from the selected notes, such as "kidnapped", "tortured", "stolen", "they were appropriated by the dictatorship" and "killer, a giant killer", value negatively the performance of the agent of the crimes.

Human rights policies driven by the national Government put in circulation a set of meanings that, in the context of the publications, act as hegemonic in the reconstruction of the national past. The discourses of *Página 12* positively categorized these meanings in discursive constructions with effects towards the historical memory.

The mentioned human rights policies are valued in the discourse of the newspaper as a socially shared experience, in which a collective national - identified on the bases of human rights - represents actors with power granted by Government to establish an agenda for the memory:

> Before the arrival of the President and his Cabinet, Mabel Gutiérrez, from Familiares de Desaparecidos y Detenidos por Razones Políticas [*Relatives of missing persons and detainees for political reasons*], read a document signed by twelve associations. (Ginzberg, 2004, "La verdad es la libertad absoluta" [*The truth is absolute freedom*])

> The Institute Espacio para la Memoria [*Space for memory*] - autonomous entity created by the city of Buenos Aires and composed by human rights organizations - will define the use of various buildings. (Vales, 2004, "A 28 años del golpe con la Plaza llena" [*28-year after the coup with a full plaza*])

Thus, the buildings mentioned in the news are, in addition to positively valued by the subject of discourse, elements that "*axiologize*" the discursive context where it is found.

Likewise, the investment of meaning upon the role of Justice in relation to the past develops in discourses so that the tragic events of the dictatorship are referred to as crimes that do not prescribe, whose resolution has its origin in public denouncements and requests for justice. In the revealing presence of the past, justice is categorized as an instance that cannot be postponed. The article of opinion "¿Quién mató a mi abuelo?" [*Who killed my grandfather?*] adds new elements to the analysis of the meaning with which *Página 12* invests to justice. The enunciative formula "los muertos que usted mató, más vivos que nunca" ["the dead who you killed, more alive than ever"] (Fuentes Walsh, 2004, *Who killed my grandfather?*) directs a dense negative axiological charge towards the *military* actor, which, then, is identified as the agent of the crimes of the Process. The argumentative strategy of *Página 12* manifests itself in relation to the actors and events. The last military dictatorship, deaths and murderers, the clandestine detention centers and the oppressors are reconstructed in the statement as objects that overlap in the agency-agent association.

The denominative apparatus of the articles reconstructs the past of the dictatorship as persistent and places justice as the ultimate goal of this persistence. Thus, in terms of the criminal and administrative sphere, justice is designated as the most reasonable future, because a past that lives in the present allows seeing *crimes* and *criminals* still subject of Justice. The reconstruction of the relationship between facts and individuals belong to a meaning strategy based on the programmatic. Names and surnames and the exact dates are a set of evidentiary elements of a tragic past that *must* be clarified.

The enunciator subject of this journal includes the facts of the dictatorship, the present human rights policies and the future of Justice, in a "unique chapter in the history". This could not be construed as incorporated by stages, but as a set of causal events that, in this case, begin with the coup d'état of 1976 and continue, *naturally,* with the course of Justice.

VICTIM - VICTIMIZER

The argumentative structure of *Página 12* operates by assigning specific roles to defined actors. The de-facto authorities are categorized as "repressive killers", establishing a lasting and unalterable, intrinsic quality for them in time.

The axiological subjetivemas of the articles valued negatively the agent of the facts of the dictatorship and categorized it in relation to their victims:

> Carlos Alberto Rizzo Molina was a civilian of the ESMA and recalled out loud how during the dictatorship he had entered

> to the same site to talk to the principal of the school, Rubén "Delfín" Chamorro, and ask him what had happened with Carlos. (Ginzberg, 2004, "La verdad es la libertad absoluta" [*The truth is absolute freedom*])

> Last Friday the Chamber of Cassation rejected the order of the repressor Raúl Scheller. (Abrevaya, 2007, "Para que los argentinos podamos volver a mirarnos a la cara" [*So that Argentines can look each other in the face again*])

> The Officials' Casino, where the missing people were held captive, will be kept intact and signposted. (Abrevaya, 2007, "Para que los argentinos podamos volver a mirarnos a la cara" [*So that Argentines can look each other in the face again*])

The victims are represented by its direct bond to players categorized as perpetrators. Thus, the denomination as "the disappeared" [or "*the missing*"], commonly referred to as a noun, is stated as a characteristic of the victims who were missing and, by this, converted into a subjetivema that attaches the involvement of an agent: axiologically categorizes to whom makes someone "disappear".

VALUATION OF THE NAVY SCHOOL

The ESMA's edifice and the events of the last military dictatorship are discursively constructed in articles as two elements that relate directly by the intervention of the human rights policies attributed to the Government.

> The grounds of the ESMA were ceded to *La Nación* to become a Museum of Memory. The President recalled those absent and apologized on behalf of the State. (Ginzberg, 2004, "La verdad es la libertad absoluta" [*The truth is absolute freedom*])

> With the arrival of the President the gates of entrance of the ESMA were opened. (Ginzberg, 2004, "La verdad es la libertad absoluta" [*The truth is absolute freedom*])

In this argumentative context, the Government and human rights organizations are categorized as producers of these new meanings, and the physical space of the ESMA as the stage where these are made visible to the view of a national collective.

In another order, denominations of the ESMA perform an operation of meaning that connects events and actors of the present, to the events and actors of the past. We could identify, in this sense, the implied convening of a topic: *the transformation of a former underground detention facility in a promoter of human rights space*. This transition is represented in the utterances as an evolution arising from the field of official policies. However, this role is specifically assigned to the Kirchner administration.

The value judgments of the articles attribute the conversion to a third person: the transformation of the ESMA is thus due to natural passing of time and fact, that on their own demanded an intervention that for it to be realized:

> The ESMA has been recovered. It is in the hands of those it should be. (Abrevaya, 2007, "Para que los argentinos podamos volver a mirarnos a la cara" [*So that Argentines can look each other in the face again*])

> The ESMA building ceased to belong to the Navy to become a space for memory and human rights. (Anón., 2007, "Profundizar el rescate de la memoria de los años terribles" [*Deepen the rescue of the memory of the terrible years*])

Accordingly, the discourse values positively the human rights policies of the government as the fulfillment of a historic duty.

A RECURRENT PAST

The discursive construction of memory in the utterances of *La Nación* gives the events of the military dictatorship a sense that transforms them into fait accompli, whose revisions cause in the present multiple disadvantages, such as political confrontations and violent demonstrations.

A group of justicialists governors who, outraged by criticism from some human rights organizations and the presidential silence on the matter, decided not to attend the commemorative ceremony held yesterday at the ESMA. (Serra, 2004, "Es imperioso cerrar ese capítulo de la historia" [*It is imperative to close this chapter of history*])

It is imperative to close this chapter of history. (Serra, 2004, "Es imperioso cerrar ese capítulo de la historia" [*It is imperative to close this chapter of history*])

Estela de Carlotto and Hebe de Bonafini, two women historically faced. (Verón 2007, "Gesto de Cristina Kirchner en la ESMA" [*Cristina Kirchner's Gesture at the ESMA*])

Likewise, the recurring appearances of the "military dictatorship chapter" in discourses of the articles do not value the past as an element that remains, but as an entity of existence alternated between appearances and disappearances of the statements. It is an opinion of value that could be identified with the following utterance: *the memories of the dictatorship and redress request through Justice generate an atmosphere of division and conflict that would be resolved by closing the historical revisions.*

La Nación represents the initiatives of the State as *political strategies of marriage appropriated by the public power.* Memory, approached from this angle of the private and confrontational, is something inconvenient, an instrument used by different political sectors in pursuit of their own goals.

The discourse of the articles of this newspaper invest a sense of triviality in the set of actions that the Government starts in this context. The human rights policies of the State are represented as dramatizations of actors and superficial events without political significance, with the emphasis moved from the public and the social to the private and emotional sphere.

> "President, I want to say that I don't have to take any flag because I've always had it in my hands like you,' said, coming back to his habit of not addresing him as a "you" in public. (Verón 2007, "Gesto de Cristina Kirchner en la ESMA" [*Cristina Kirchner's Gesture at the ESMA*])

> The attitude of Cristina Kirchner, who spent the day at her residence in El Calafate, sparked criticism in the march organized by opposition sectors. (Sued, 2008, Piden acelerar los juicios a represores" [*The trials of oppressors are asked to be accelerated*])

A superficial memory exercise in a context of widespread euphoria, only leads to clashes and political confrontation. In relation to this respect, the revision of the past promoted by the Government is valued as a melancholic action that promotes the construction of a *memory that does not overcome the events*.

JUSTICE

The role of Justice during the development of the official human rights policies is represented by utterances of notes tacitly presuming the dependence of the judicial system to the Government.

> President Cristina Kirchner's complaint, who in her last speech before Congress held the Court responsible. (Anón., 2008, "De las 800 causas, solo 22 llegaron a juicio oral" [*Out of 800 causes, only 22 made it to an oral proceeding*])

> [Cristina Fernández] Reaffirmed the official claim to speed up trials to the oppressors. (Verón 2007, "Gesto de Cristina Kirchner en la ESMA" [*Cristina Kirchner's Gesture at the ESMA*])

Thus, the discourse of *La Nación*, by axiologically denominated the actions of the justice, makes it also on the structure of Government, understood from the system of ideas and beliefs of the editorial line, as a power that violates the exclusive powers of another power. The meaning, in this case, operates as a forward to the following principle of congruence: *Authoritarian President – magistrates called to order, so, Government and justice are questionable*.

THE FACTS OF THE MILITARY DICTATORSHIP

In the articles of *La Nación*, predominantly, the subject of the military dictatorship does not take a dimension of today. On the contrary, it is included and suppressed successively, by a subject of discourse that bases the discursive construction of memory on a single evocation of the past. The utterances of the articles value the crimes during the Process as inherent facts of a "terrible decade" facts for Argentina.

> From beginning to end, the decade of the 70's was very bad for Argentina (...) marked by the conversion of the society in armed sides, confronted without measure and without law. (Morales Solá, 2004, "Retorno a los setenta" [*Return to the seventies*])

The discourses of this newspaper represent the tragic events of the dictatorship with the syntactic passive voice, suppressing the agent of the facts and, for this reason, the possibility of a discourse with expectation of future justice. The omissions to the violence agency are reinforced, in this last example, by the mention of "the decade", temporary route of bilateral conflicts. Such operation is carried out fully in one of the selected articles of our corpus: "El terrorismo de Estado destruye la última frontera entre la civilización y la barbarie" [*State terrorism destroys the last border between civilization and barbarism*] (Morales Solá, 2004, "Retorno a los setenta" [*Return to the seventies*]).

The last military dictatorship, thus, is valued as a hopelessly old event that permeates the present.

> The past always completely permeates the present and ignores the future. (Morales Solá, 2004, "Retorno a los setenta" [*Return to the seventies*])

> The former President declared an irremovable day holiday, two years ago, and generated a strong controversy. (Verón, 2008, "La Presidenta no fue a ningún acto y se quedó en El Calafate" [*The President did not attend any acts and remained at El Calafate*])

> When Kirchner withdrawled, there was destruction, theft of materials and paintings on the walls. (Rodríguez Yebra, 2004, "El Presidente pidió perdón en la ESMA" [*The President apologized at the ESMA*])

These denominations proposed to abandon the process of revision of the dictatorial past, which in the argumentative structure of the Government represents a central element, for considering it a prescribed matter, inconvenient for building the reconciled future.

"TWO SIDES, WITHOUT MEASURE AND WITHOUT LAW"

On the other hand, the denominative apparatus of *La Nación* operates by assigning moral responsibility of the outcome of the dictatorship, but categorizes the criminal responsibilities as an element whose research produces multiple administrative difficulties in justice and a state of social clashes. Thus, utterances of articles vested the issue of the responsibilities of the military dictatorship of a well defined meaning, which consist of building the past of the last Argentine dictatorship as marked by an atmosphere of anarchy: "protesters entered the grounds and there was extensive damage" (Rodríguez Yebra, 2004, "El Presidente pidió perdón en la ESMA" [*The President apologized at the ESMA*]. The illegality of State forces is identified as designated opponents, that challenge their ability to answer:

> Armed sides, confronted without measure and without law. (Morales Solá, 2004, "Retorno a los setenta" [*Return to the seventies*])

In an extension of this enunciative strategy, "insurgency of the past" is an identifiable negative value identifiable with the insurgency of the present:

> The stage had been set up in Comodoro Rivadavia Street, but hundreds of protesters followed the act from inside, perched in buildings or crammed against the bars. There was not a single military and the Federal police deployed outside the venue. (Rodríguez Yebra, 2004, "El Presidente pidió perdón en la ESMA" [*The President apologized at the ESMA*])

> The President seems at times carried in a fumbling way by the imprint of more sectarian human rights organizations. (Morales Solá, 2004, "Retorno a los setenta" [*Return to the seventies*])

The utterances of *La Nación*, the discourses of the mythical memory, reconstruct the occurrences of the national past as disconnected of the actors.

THE "THEORY OF THE TWO DEMONS"

However, it is possible to find a relationship of harmony between the strategic choices of the subject of discourse of *La Nación* (for the selected corpus) and the so-called "theory of the two demons". It emerged, without ever being enunciated as such, from the confluence of social organizations and academic cores to discuss the issue of responsibilities assigned for crimes *against humanity* in the context of democratic transition. The theory of the two demons is constituted in a polemic category coined by a critical emitter (Franco, 2014). It designates, as a negative value, the operation of equitable distribution of blame between the military de-facto State and militant social organizations existing then. The opposition between rival memories, as stated by Jelin (2002), unfolds in a space of political struggles.

In the academic field, broadly speaking, it is possible to differentiate between three reflective approaches. The first corresponds to the group formed by Elizabeth Jelin (2002-2013), Lucas Bietti (2008) and Marina Franco (2008 and 2014), among others. Bietti (2008), on the other hand, ensures that the theory of the two demons "is, without a doubt, the topic of democratic transition that crosses all discursive formulation and the impossibility of recognition of the historical character of the phenomenon and its actors" (p. 3). The primordial role of cause and origin of violence given to the armed organizations, says Franco (2014), is an explanatory factor of "current stigma towards revolutionary militancy in general" (p. 25). For the author, the theory of the two demons is an object of buoyant character, with differential meaning effects in every epoch of post-dictatorial democracy. The current attribution of a negative axiological charge to such theory is a clear sign of the political impact of the sectors related to the movement for human rights in Argentina. Finally, Jelin (2013), after pointing out that actors who claim the past dictatorial action are gaining a voice in the public sphere, introduces one caveat. The author warns of the risk of the thoughtless use of the theory of the two demons to cap the complexity with which the phenomena of the dictatorship should be addressed. "It would seem that there are subjects defined as inconvenient, annoying, improper," she points out (p. 95). In line with Claudia Hilb (2013), Jelin raises the impossibility of a unified narrative and the need to establish some basic principles - human dignity, equality, justice – in the "today", when "multiple interpretive disputes are opening" (Jelin, 2013, p. 96).

In the discourses of *La Nación*, the representation of the theory of the two demons is only the previous operation that gives space to the designation of a single culprit, recognized in those *responsible for the triggerinf of the decade of the seventies*.

> Not to equal responsibilities, because they are simply not equal those of the insurgent groups that rose up against the State than the ones the armed institutions representing the State have. (Morales Solá, 2004, "Retorno a los setenta" [*Return to the seventies*])

> The best way to honor the dead is to not use them – *emphasized* Deputy Humberto Roggero (P[artido]J[usticialista]-Córdoba) -. (Serra, 2004, "Es imperioso cerrar ese capítulo de la historia" [*It is imperative to close this chapter of history*]) *the emphasis is of the author.

This argumentative structure ("return", "decade of the seventies", "armed sides") attributed the responsibilities of the events of the dictatorship in a different way to the discourses circulating during the decade of the nineties. In this period, the theory of the two demons acquired a remarkable momentum through the discursive set of media and the promulgation of the Act of clemency. The utterances that make up the corpus of this research, with other meaning operations, assigned the responsibilities of military repressive actions to a diffuse collective "the armed sides of the decade of the seventy". Symmetrical responsabilities are built, but "the blame" for crimes committed during the period of the dictatorship are attributed to the civil movements that "precipitated the inevitable institutional repression".

VALUATIONS ON THE ESMA

The subject of discourse of *La Nación* does not build meaning that link the ESMA with the past of the military dictatorship. It categorizes the building as the center of operations for the President, a platform used for the vindication of its role as 'judge of history'. The space is referred to as property of the Navy that the Government uses a useful instrument to its objectives.

> Hundreds of protesters followed the Act from inside, perched on the buildings or crammed against the bars. (Rodríguez Yebra, 2004, "El Presidente pidió perdón en la ESMA" [*The President apologized at the ESMA*])

> He had already ordered to open the bars of the ESMA, facing an ovation from the crowd with flags and banners. (Rodríguez Yebra, 2004, "El Presidente pidió perdón en la ESMA" [*The President apologized at the ESMA*])

The argumentative structure that categorizes the ESMA in the discourses produces an effect of sense that values it as a venue without functionality, "old".

> When Kirchner decided to transform the ESMA in Museum of Memory and led a ceremony at the Military School, where the portraits of former Presidents de-facto Jorge Rafael Videla and Reynaldo Bignone were removed... (Verón, 2008, "La Presidenta no fue a ningún acto y se quedó en El Calafate" [*The President did not attend any acts and remained at El Calafate*])

> The seventies nostalgia is neither good nor bad; it is hopelessly old. (Morales Solá, 2004, "Retorno a los setenta" [*Return to the seventies*])

> That symbol of the violation of human rights was to have another life. (Morales Solá, 2004, "Retorno a los setenta" [*Return to the seventies*])

The utterances of the articles negatively value the human rights policies staged at the ESMA. Discourses of memory circulating at the time of the emergence of the analyzed utterances have with them a dying relationship. The denominations that are prevalent in the discursive context assign to ESMA "a life that should not have had".

By the argument about "the another life" that the space should have had, testimonial value attributed by other Government speeches about building is excluded. In this way, *La Nación* builds the place as an installation, a physical space, without marks of the tragic past:

> The Museum of memory was not even opened, and it has not yet determined the fate of the buildings that were occupied by the Navy training institutes. (Anón., 2007, "Entregaron la ESMA para el Museo de la Memoria" [*EMSA was given for the Museum of memory*])

> Finally yesterday the latest agreement was signed to make the transfer of the place to the hands of the Secretary of Human Rights and of the city of Buenos Aires. (Anón., 2007, "Entregaron la ESMA para el Museo de la Memoria" [*EMSA was given for the Museum of memory*])

Página 12's utterances reconstruct the past relating it to the present, so that, on the one hand, the former is revealed affecting the latter and, on the other hand, the latter is designated as a present lacking future repair: the reason for the reconstruction of the past is in the precariousness of present Justice. The predominant strategy of meaning of this newspaper is identified, therefore, with the discursive construction of historical memory, in which the facts of the Process are represented as an element that, *a priori,* creates a programmatic component of the discourses. Meaning, constructions of never consummated past are put into motion, charged with a meaning yet to be constructed. The past of violence collects, by itself, a sense of validity, by which the judgments that value it at present are not anachronistic.

Mythical memory built in *La Nación*'s articles, on the other hand, produce an effect of meaning called by Paul Ricoeur (2000) as a *deep forgetfulness level*. With this category, Ricoeur tries to explain the discursive strategies in which the past is not reconstructed as an inscription of something that remains, but as what is evoked by repeating it ritually.

One of the newspapers analyzed builds, in a predominant way, the memory of the tragic past of the military dictatorship as a record of the past. The other sits in the constructions of historical memory, establishing a framework for recovery of the event in the present and a horizon of expectation.

DISCUSSION

The construction of meaning on the military dictatorship in Argentina is conditioned by a complex social context that acts as its producing grammars and is printed in the texts of the analyzed articles as brand form. The research work outlined here takes over the task of identifying regularities of a process of consciousness from designation paradigms or *subjetivemas*, since it recognizes that the subject of discourse is part of a designation level and the relationship between the description and the context of their production.

The subjective positioning of the discourses of both newspapers stands, in the words of Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1993), as "a representative and spokesperson of a social group, an ideological-institutional instance" (p. 235). We have already described briefly, in connection with this, the institutional conditions, the area of coverage and reader model inherent to *Página 12* and *La Nación* respectively; such conditions shape a wider system of determination (Verón, 1985), which establishes a relationship of *necessity* and not only of possibility with the discursive product.

Concerning the conditions, Kerbrat-Orecchioni gives emphasis[5] to the *discursive formation* category that is central to understand grammar production. Said notion is used by Pecheux (2003) and Foucault (2011) to refer to phenomena by which ideological formations occur in enunciative fields in which they occur and compete, limiting each other in this common semiotic space. Analysis of the discursive construction of the event *ESMA, Memory Center* is, all things considered, a significant cluster that crystallizes traces of a competitive- and agonic space between two discursive formations.

THE CONVENED AND CONVENER TOPIC. "JUSTICE"

The paradigms of designation of Justice constitute one of the places where it is possible to recognize the dispute about meaning.

Página 12 discourses that build the validity of the presidential function of memory (the official memory) as a natural drift of the popular delegation, and consider justice (institution that imputes) as an urgent value. The urgency of the judging is explained, then, by the popular origin of the order to *repair*. However, justice on the facts of the tragic past is portrayed as a democratic assembly act and *Página 12*, as a subject sublimed to the democratic popular reason it promotes.

In the discursive space of the articles of *La Nación*, where popular memory and the *interpellation to justice* conform operators of segregation and conflict, the programmatic value of Justice would consist of closing the "chapter" opened by other discourses. The construction of the logical correspondence between public memory and justice (institution that imputes), in this way, is closed by an operation that "social division" and "conflict" (memory-division and conflict-prosecution-division and conflict-new prosecutions, etc.) as only possible effects of popular discourse of memory. The economy of both paradigms about justice is organized around a common delimiter axis: *the (in)validity of the popular reference of the judicial proceedings*. The limit imposed for the discourses of the discursive formation in which *La Nación* is inscribed is the path by utterances of *Página 12*. As Maingueneau (at Charaudeau & Maingueneau, 2005) points out, the set of discursive formations coexisting and interacting enter a competitive relationship, delimiting each other.

On the complexity of the subject of memory, Héctor Schmucler (2009) pronounces that we "should accept, perhaps with joy, that memory is not anything other than a question without end" (p. 37). The research program was based on the assumption of the dispute between discursive representations of the past as a dispute between memories. The present interacting discursive formations in the Argentine media is the scene from which the Argentine tragic past is reconfigured, acquiring new meanings, re building itself.

MEMORIES IN DISPUTE

The interpretative judgments that can be identified in the discourses lead to different praxemas; meaning they connote, in varying degrees, "the different praxis characteristics of the society that manages them" (Gabilondo, 1999, p. 10). The ways of interpretation of the past in the Argentine media play a vital role in the course of their praxis. We declare the need to assume that the discursive strategies in this agonizing semiotic space constitute practices that objectify the past and engage in relations of dissonance and consonance with the context of discursive practices that take place.

At this point, it is valid to say, as does Jelin (2002), that the memory space "is a space for political struggle. Memory against oblivion or silence hides what is in reality an opposition between different rival memories"[6] (p. 6).

The hierarchization, on *Página 12*, of the chronicle of March 25, 2004, regarding the reopening of the ESMA finds, in this specific aspect, a similar relationship to the one given by *La Nación*: located on the cover. In the semiotic space, a theme whose meaning is

disputed by two discursive subjects with a common hierarchization strategy is configured. Now, as we noted, on this surface of emergency relationships of competition and substitution are formed, that present characteristics, which present the inherent characteristics of the *angenotiana* notion (2010) of the *dying speech*[7] (2010). *La Nación* invests on the object *ESMA* a meaning that represents it as an entity of the present, without symbolic links with the past. On the other hand, the categorization of the building as the backdrop for the act of an instrumentalist President articulates it with the identification of the Armed Forces as a proprietary subject. The head of the Argentine Government is represented in the counter-discourse in *La Nación*, by the figure of an actor who becomes a resource that is alien and starts a speech proposing the memory of a space that does not keep any serious relationship with the past. Paradoxically, the discursive formula "old edifice" is constituted in that direction. The attribution to the grounds the character "old" fits in with the broader update strategy of the need to give it functionality and modernize it. The present of the ESMA building is projected to the future of it discard, in dissonance with *Página 12*, which attributes a probationary past and a present with a guard function. In its articles, the names "cell and torture rooms", "hectares of the grounds of Nuñez", "facade of the building" and " Casino of Official ", designated physical spaces whose relationship with its last feature has not lost validity, but it has become a condition of possibility of justice.

The manifestation of an incompatibility between positions in competition replicates the broader constellation discursive social tensions. Here it becomes necessary to conceive the discursive practice as a strategic and controversial game in a field of disputes.

Lucrecia Escudero Chauvel (2002) adds to this by attributing the missing people issue to action of a "set of complex discursive strategies and conflict that put to the test not only a theory of reception of the media discourses but also a semiotic theory of passions intra and extra-discursive" (p. 188). It is important to stop at this point. It is possible to recognize, in history of the constructions of meaning about ESMA (where we locate our analyzed matter) a pathemic journey, in Escudero's terms, in the context of the discourse of *Página 12* and *La Nación*. On June 15, 1998, a publicity of the graphic medium *Perfil* deleted, in a picture that evokes the corner of the street Libertador and the General Paz Avenue of the city of Buenos Aires, any pictorial reference to the facilities of the ESMA. On January 7 of the same year, then-President Carlos Menem, presented a draft Law that proposed to demolish the building and to build there, instead, the "park of national reconciliation".

Claudio Martyniuk (2004), in his popular book "*Fenomenología de la desaparición*" [*Phenomenology of the disappearance*], asserts, "ESMA, required to hide, impose, annihilate, disappear lives. Hides the concealment of lives" (p. 42). Twenty years earlier, the "Never Again" report, prepared by the Comisión Nacional Sobre la Desaparición de Personas [*National Commission on the Disappearance of People*] (CONADEP, 1984), pronounced its verdict: "the ESMA was not only a clandestine detention center (...) but the operating shaft of a complex organization that even possibly intended to hide with the extermination of their victims, the crimes committed" (p. 91). The agreeement N ° 08/04, signed by the national Government and the city of Buenos Aires to create the Memory Center, mentioned the detention center as the place where "an estimated number of 5,000 men and women of all ages suffered a calvary prior to their death, constituting a tragic symbol of the instauration of the horror". Vezzetti (2004), the same year that the ESMA was opened to the public, became part of the academic spectrum that branded the initiative: "an initiative such as the Museum of Memory on the grounds of the ESMA faces one major problem: new ways to raise and discuss the criteria and guidelines of the construction of memory emerge" (p. 3).

It is in this way that the process of meaning is formed, running with a whole group of complex discursive practices, from the social system and ideological determination. It is simple to give it the implications of this statement. However, we must warn that its observation is part of research objectives of an investigation concerned with the possible relations between memory and social discourses.

Suppose that we could address the articles of both *Página 12* and *La Nación* using a representational analysis. Then, the sustained hypothesis would be that the materiality of the discourses reproduces the reality that it represents. However, the results of the work presented here where obtained by an analysis focused in recognizing linguistic texts as footprints (Verón, 1985), traces of meaning phenomena. Eliseo Verón (1985, 2004), recovering the substance from Peirce's *synechism* category, emphasizes in the materiality of the meaning as a point forward to social, economic and ideological conditions.

A complex system of determinations crystallizes in *Página 12* articles and *La Nación*. The inversion of meaning on the publications concerning the transformation of the ESMA in a Memory Center remains accessible in the tissue of discursive fragments, in designation paradigms. The meaning process over *ESMA, Memory Center*, therefore, lies in diffuse borders that would prevent from attributing a sign to an object. Instead, the inclusion of this handful of media discourses in a complex and discontinuous process of infinite semiosis is suggested. In this sense, it is necessary to introduce two clarifications.

First, the choice of the materials that compose our corpus followed a criterion based on the following principle: publications *Página 12* and *La Nación* on May 25, 2008 close the formal utterances selected set, but it comprises only *a* material manifestation of meaning in a broader process, in whose development it is possible to recognize the remaining publications of the corpus. Secondly, due to method and conceptual coherence requirements, it becomes a requirement to assume that discourse staging of the meaning process about ESMA occurs on conditions whose character is also discursive. The articles of both newspapers referring to the mysterious death of Febres during his reclusion, once are placed into circulation, produce effects (called by Veron *effects of power*) which constitute, in relation to a context of signifying practices, the conditions of production of the articles about the acts of March 24, 2008 (following, after five days, the publication on the prefect's death).

THE TRANSITIVE AND THE INTRANSITIVE IN THE DISCOURSES

This calls for a reflection already opened in the field of memory studies. The set of regularities and discontinuities provided by this work leads us to look into a category proposed by Todorov (2000) in his famous work *The abuses of memory:* "transitivity". The author questioned how much memory is used to expand the horizon of experiences and expectations, or restricted itself to the description of the historical fact. In this sense, the author proposes "an exemplary use, where the memory of a past fact is seen as an instance of a more general category, or as a model to understand new situations, with different agents" (p. 31).

At the opposite extreme, Todorov (2000) located the act of using the past, rather than retrieving it productively. When speaking of forgetting, we are pronouncing the (political) forgetting experience's the singular and uniqueness, which makes memory less productive. Such use of the past is to "preserve a literal memory, where victims and crimes are seen as unique and unrepeatable" (p. 32). In these constructions of memory, the past is represented as a non-transitive experience that does not lead beyond itself, not linking the facts of the past to new developments to understand them. "Literal memory - says the author - is locked up in itself. Causes and consequences of the fact shall be understood to delve into it, but not to guide future behavior" (p. 31).

The reason for mythical memory, recognized as strategic operation of *La Nación*, is linked to the benefits of 'good conscience'. The mythical memory of human rights violations gives predominance to the non-transitive representations dimension. Provided that closing the possible relationships between the revealed facts from the present and the past, the subject of mythical memory suppresses the transitive value that the past potentially has. It is redound at the level of the expression of the accumulated set of signifiers: "not only memory would be threatened by the suppression of information, but also by their superabundance" (Todorov, 2000, p. 32).

Some media, in line with *La Nación*, categorize the traumatic events that occurred during the military dictatorships in the Southern Cone as "painful lapses suffered in developing countries". However, meanings that recover the past as a model for understanding of new situations are also built, as a principle of action; in terms of Todorov, as potentially releasing memory. *Página 12*'s discourse, as we saw, used descriptions that designate, with a high degree of specificity, the roles of actors and the topography of physical spaces. In the same direction, they reconstruct the chronology of both the facts of the past and the present, with which the first acquire connections thoroughly described.

The temporal-spatial coordinates of the mass circulation of discourse of memory act by way of grammars of media texts. There past experience is put into function and updated, and future expectations are projected.

Elizabeth Jelin (2002) brings to this issue by linking the past of the military Process with the institutional present. The author defines the years of the dictatorship as those "moments that are present in public rituals, in

which different actors choose to express and confront, on the national stage, the senses giving to institutional breakdowns" (p. 1).

It is necessary, for the purposes of our work, to introduce a warning. Not only the historical memory builds a discourse with programmatic components. If we understand the memory as a job, it can be argued that mythical constructions predominate in discourses of *La Nación*, over the historical. We must avoid assigning the mythic and historic characters as exclusionary *types* and exclusive in the discourses of a same discursive formation. Rather, here we conclude on the regularities in the predominance of a memory dimension on the other in some discourses. Thus, the programmatic component not confessed but present in the discourses of *La Nación* confines the past to the future in the ritual and thoughtless repetition. About this Adriana Bergero (1997) expressed that the mythical memory is a "practice of de-dramatization, remoteness and passivity, an elaboration that legitimates the same discourse it produces, at the same time by obscuring any possibility of social contract or commitment to the future" (p. 71).

THE INVOLVED SUBJECT - THE IMAGINATION AND MEMORY

In 1996, Paul Ricoeur introduced a program of lectures he named *Decir y no decir: el sujeto implicado* [*To say and not say: the involved subject*]. In those texts, the author invites to discover that the subject that reconstructs meanings of the past supposedly consummated not only remembers. The subject recalls by celebrating, imagining what up to the instance of the construction was absent (Ricoeur, 2000).

In this sense, it is necessary to bring forward two phenomena. The first is the *subject involved*. The media, as *La Nación* and *Página 12*, are among the privileged voices in the social construction of memories. The events of the past are categorized axiologically by value judgments about events involving actors and events in relationship in the discourses. The involved subject is one that is built on the discourse from differential strategic choices. *Página 12* and *La Nación*, then, produce actors and events and make a subject emerge (enunciative position), which gives them different connections in each case. However, we must not give in to the impulse of relativizing the matter referred to the responsibility of discursive strategic maneuvers.

The analysis of media discourse on tragic events of the past, like the one exposed in this work, is presented with a question mark: how to denominate - and, therefore, how to assess - discursive constructions of memory conveyed by the media whose dissemination is through massive technology? Ángel Gabilondo (1999), in his preface to the edition of Ricoeur conferences, says, "a new representation, including a recreation of reality is needed" but adds that "the fragility of memory claims responsibility" (p. 9). We consider necessary to transfer the prominence assigned by Gabilondo to the issue of responsibility of the act of memory, to the tasks of the analytical procedure for all ethically responsible research. The quality of implications of the subject of memory is transferable, or so we propose it here, to the implication required of the subject of semiotic analysis. The approach to the construction of memories must confess the enunciative position that the same academic discourse of the research enshrined in their thoughts. Such a position is established in relation to discourses that the subject selected for analysis and those that share the academic enunciative field.

The second definition is the imagination. The discourses of historical memory, as the one of *Página 12*, when constructing meaning on past events, it turns it into a problem. In this way, the media attribute themselves with the task of rescuing aspects of the event that were absent. In this sense, they imagine they give a space to new notions of the past, that they recreate it. Ricoeur called them *inventions*. Perhaps it would be valid to designate them re-invention. These consist of the configuration of new relationships between the past and the present. "To invent is to assist new connections between the past, which falls as a burden, and the future" (Gabilondo, 1999, p. 9). The assignment, in the discourses of *Página 12*, of specific and unique characteristics to objects of the past, fits in this meaning operation.

Media, when denominating and categorizing official human rights policy of the present, construct memories over a tragic national past.

This research retrieves the categories of historical and mythical memory, but does not seek to attribute effects of uniform meaning, even less so to the discourses of the analyzed media. On the other hand, it recognizes the complexity of the enunciative field in which discursive mediatized constructions of the past take part. As said, a coherent analysis of the discursive

construction of memory must avoid a description of their differences as fixed and irreducible distances between *pure* types of memory discourses. The discursive set that makes up our corpus debates thus, of the dialectical and complex relationship between the transitive or historical memory and the non-transitive or mythical. It is about, then, effects of predominant meaning towards one or another modality of memory building. A debate that remains in the scene of our post-modern democracies.

FOOTNOTES

1. Graciela Ferrero, in her text *"Pentimento. Los arrepentidos argentinos del 95"* [*Pentimento. The argentinian repentants on 95*] denominates "light regime" to the predominance of a discursive cluster with programmatic justice components. This, according to Ferrero, was in force from the years after the return to democratic order until the sanctioning of the laws known as Punto Final [Full Stop -1986] and Obediencia Debida [Due Obedience] in 1987, and would be rekindled in 2003, with new significant practices that reconstructed again the past of the military dictatorship.

2. Luzmila da Silva Catela adds that " the plural of the term "memories" not only points to a dispute between representations of past events to impose in the public sphere, but a series of constructions that, when competing, are redefined and complemented".

3. The report "Nunca Más" [*Never Again*] also known as "Informe Sábato" [*Sábato Report*], published in September 1984, was conducted by the Comisión Nacional sobre la Desaparición de Personas [*National Commission on the Disappearance of People*] (CONADEP), created by the Argentine government in 1983 with the objective of clarifying and investigating forced disappearances occurred during the military dictatorship in Argentina. See http://www.derechoshumanos.net/lesahumanidad/informes/argentina/informe-de-la-CONADEP-Nunca-mas.htm

4. Repressor arrested in December 1998 because of the the case of the systematic appropriation of children born in captivity, for his performance as liaison between the Guard and the Navy during the dictatorship. In December 2007 he was finishing the trial that had him as the sole repressor sitting on the accused's bench. On the 10th of that month his body was found in the cell and after the autopsy the experts informed the judges of finding high doses of cyanide. After several months of investigation, the judge was ruled that the death was caused by the ingestion of the poison, which would have been forced. See, for example, "Juicio a Héctor Febres (represor de la ESMA)" [*Héctor Febres's Trial (repressor from ESMA)*] at http://casapueblos-juicio-febres-esma.blogspot.com/

5. Discursive formations, according Kerbrat - Orecchioni (1993), "determine what can and should be said from a group of attitudes , representations, etc., based on class positions confronted with others in the ideological combination that characterizes a social formation at a given moment" (p . 235)

6. However, the notion of memory in dispute do not isolate the fact that Michael Pollak (2006) points to when saying that "the reference to the past serves to maintain the cohesion of groups and institutions that make up a society, to define their respective places, its complementarity" (p . 25). Thus, according to Pollak, the construction of a past is closely linked to the social, institutional identity.

7. Eliseo Verón (1987) proposes the close category adversarial word, to refer to the dispute generated in the same meaning investiture work; the other opponent, in the political discourse, forms an essential part of the conditions of production of the own discourse.

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