

“Demasiado Poco Homenaje”: The Eva Perón Tomato and Absence within Living Memorials

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Abstract Memorials to Eva Perón surround the world, but one example remains overlooked: the Eva Perón tomato. Developed in honor of the former Argentine First Lady, and within a pattern of eight other fruit and vegetable varieties named after Eva and Juan Perón. We ask how the Peróns are represented through these plant varieties. Through an online critical audit of seed offerings, we find consistent absences within their living memorial landscape. We then ask what broader impacts and affects these absences generate within the context of food-based living memorials. We contextualize the idea of living memory and absence's presence shaping the representations and more-than-human affects of biography.

Keywords Memory. Heritage. Memorials. Eva Perón. Absence.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Living Memory. – 3 The Peróns, Memorialized. – 4 Evita Corn, Pumpkin, Squash, and Strawberry. – 5 The Perón Tomato(es). – 6 A Present Absence. – 7 Conclusion.



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1 Introduction

Within the ecology of life, death is a necessary partner.

(Deborah Bird Rose, *Environmental Philosophy*, 2012, 127)

The Eva Perón tomato was developed by Professor Abelardo Piovano at Universidad Nacional de Cuyo and named in honor of First Lady, Eva Perón. Meli (2017, 87) writes that the School of Science's board of directors drafted a manifesto that the naming of a tomato was "demasiado poco homenaje" (too little homage; transl. by the Author) for a figure as important as Eva Perón (cf. Tacchini 2018). Despite the legacy Perón left behind and the fact that the tomato is named after her, the tomato's legacy and even its name has paid little homage to her as the tomato today goes by the name Peron sprayless or even Juan Peron (without an accent over the 'o'). Across dozens of online retailers selling or sharing Perón-based varieties, none acknowledge, let alone describe, the life and death of Eva (or Juan) Perón.

Recent research has identified an emergent and growing pattern of using eponyms, or the name of specific individuals, in the naming of plant-based food varieties (Rhodes, Kieve 2023; Rhodes, Bartoszek 2024). Inspired by existing work on the Paul Robeson tomato and the political economies underlying the structures of living memory, our work isolates not only the Eva Perón tomato, but an additional nine varieties named after Eva and Juan Perón. We are left asking the question, however, of *how* the Peróns are commemorated through living memorials or food-based plants, with the follow-up question of why all varieties fail to either mention the historical significance of the Peróns or acknowledge deeper human representations within the eponymic commemoration. After systematically searching through multiple seed websites, inspired by a process of documenting representation in the memorial landscape by D'Ignazio et al. (2022) called a "critical audit", and performing a content analysis, this paper argues how these Perón varieties, instead of memorializing, make absent or obfuscate the human within these human-environment relations. There are also the historical contexts of shifting names, where the Eva Perón tomato is often now referred to as the Peron sprayless tomato, the Juan Peron sprayless tomato, the Juan Peron tomato, or simply the Peron tomato. The erasure of Hispanic and female identifiers of the memorial by removing Eva's name and the accent within Perón also symbolize ongoing patterns found within memorialization, commemoration, agriculture, and everyday ecologies of life and death more broadly.

This paper draws from a mixture of approaches from posthumanism and political ecology to introduce the concept of living memory and then explore how one's legacy is preserved through the memorialization of plant-based food varieties, with an emphasis on

the Eva Perón tomato, as well as other forms of living memory. This work also falls within broader considerations of ecological memory but offers alternative pathways to existing patterns of eco-mourning as we consider the significance of cultural resiliency alongside the ecological memory and heritage work of gardening, plant breeding, and seedsaving. Ecological resistance within memory and heritage work, however, can also reflect or even inspire parallel violence within industrial agriculture of unsustainable production, genetic modification, and the hybridization, patenting, and commercialization of seeds. Reactionary ecologies of life and death also emerge as we find below when some individuals name their own plant varieties in opposition to those named for the Peróns, despite finding minimal biographical engagement, overall. We consider the additional varieties named after Eva Perón, including the Evita tomato, Evita corn, Evita pumpkin, Evita strawberry, and Evita squash, as well as the conflicting nomenclature from the Juan Peron tomato, the Juan Peron sprayless tomato, and the Peron sprayless tomato. After performing data collection across websites that list or discuss these different varieties and attempting content and discourse analysis, we can begin to understand the importance of memorialization and its absence. From here, we can paint a picture of how, although they are named in honor of the Peróns, they fail to acknowledge the mark they made on the world. Furthermore, these living memorials inspire deeper questions of the political ecologies of life and death. Multiple layers include the life and death of the tomato plants, their continuation via seedsaving or agency through adaptation and propagation, and the ecological relationships at work commemorating the life and death of individuals with their own tenuous humanitarian impacts. While Eva Perón's decade of political action is often framed as a symbol of social justice, particularly across Latin America, Juan Perón's legacy of social justice and reform across thirty years of Argentinian politics, has been marred by his fascist sympathies and extrajudicial killings. These various scales of life and lived experiences across the political ecologies of memorialization offer a poignant means of discussing memory and eco-imaginaries within the more-than-human world. We find a clear connection between the political ecology of a capitalist system that strips contexts from our food systems and the lost posthumanist heritage of a previously intertwined living memorial – the Eva Perón tomato.

2 Living Memory

Plants play a critical role in shaping politics, the environment, and the mutual relationship between living non-human elements and humans. Plants are essential to human survival. While over time

humans have shaped the lives of plants through various activities, posthumanist work has more recently centered plants' shaping of the living memory of humans (Head 2009). Living memory is often cited as simply the events and experiences that one can remember. It allows us to understand historical events and construct an image or narrative of the past (Assman 2011). However, we present living memory differently, by incorporating a more explicitly human-environmental relations perspective. Drawing from Rose (2012) and Ginn (2016), we frame living memory as the embodiment of the past in the present. This multispecies and generational approach to time frames every creature as "both itself in the present, and the history of its forebears and mutualists" (Rose 2012, 136). Ginn (2016, 7) states that "creatures become living embodiments of past times". His work in the garden, of using plants to memorialize,

underscores the transience of life, memory and presence, as plants can become detached from the object they memorialize over time, or can themselves die, grow into new shapes, or become nuisances. (Ginn 2014, 236)

We ask how a more-than-human framing of living memory can shift our perspectives and allow foci not just upon the use of non-human materials for memorialization, but the agencies and affects of spaces just as gardens and groves within our commemorative landscape (Cloke, Pawson 2008; Ginn 2016)?

While living memorials, as we are engaging with them can commemorate living persons, most are memorials for the deceased. In this way, non-human life commemorating the loss of human life finds dialogue with the human contemplation of the loss of non-human life. "Eco-mourning", framed as an emotional response to environmental loss that centers or glorifies mourning over alternative responses, often fails to contextualize the capitalist and colonial conditions within or the alternative futures of response to ecological disasters (de Massol de Rebetz 2020; O'Key 2021). While these comparisons may offer relevant connections, they nonetheless fall into the same traps of eco-mourning itself by isolating the human from the more-than-human. Incorporating a posthuman perspective into living memory instead frames ecological (including human) loss within the same threads of emotional and social responses towards sustainability and preservation in order to not only remember, but to learn and rectify the lost work contributed from those mourned.

Food-based plant varieties also navigate complex social and economic relationships within broader contexts of life and death in the Anthropocene. Rhodes and Bartoszek (2024) find that while older eponymic varieties are considered heirloom and more integrated into local communities reflecting more local cultural traditions, in the

past half century, in particular, we can see an industrialization of these varieties, with private companies naming the majority of living memorials. Growing local plant varieties can benefit the environment when crops are closely linked to cultural landscapes. They are passed down from generation to generation through practices like seed exchange, which contribute to cultural tradition. Jordan (2015, 45) connects these heirloom histories across a spectrum of edible memory and heritage where "at one end are people with their personal edible memories of cherished family heirlooms" and at the other end, a "broader pursuit of local, seasonal, or novel cuisine". This is where living memory comes into play and works to preserve a connection between seed-saving methods, tradition, and generations to come. Seed saving and exchange are important parts of many traditional food-based plant varieties, and they provide farmers with knowledge that can be shared (Campbell, Veteto 2015). Heirlooms and the heritage value they accumulate help to resist industrial agriculture, assigning cultural and economic value through more personalized forms of biodiversity and eco-resistance.

Growing and sharing locally adapted plant varieties strengthens the connection between culture and the seed cultivator, however with the increased industrialization of living memorials and even the commercialization of heirloom varieties there has been both an increased use of commemorative practices solely for marketing purposes and an erasure of biographical narratives alongside the varieties (Jordan 2015; Rhodes, Bartoszek 2024). This intersection of biological and biographical loss connects our work into ongoing studies of eco-mourning.

Nevertheless, cultural narratives passed down from the seed cultivator can help others recognize the cultural significance of seeds. Through shared experience from the seed cultivator, people can remember the specific characteristics of different varieties, such as taste, appearance, and adaptability to local conditions, if they live long enough. Cultural narratives also help people connect. Just like the achievements, impacts, and significance of influential individuals like Eva can be remembered across generations (Nesbitt 2023).

Hispanic (and many other non-English) memorial landscapes also feature a uniquely colonial racialization of language. In a study of 45 major museums in New York and California, 31 of which utilized some amount of written Spanish, Callahan (2014) found that 12 contained errors in translation, spelling, and grammar. Both the California Science Center and the National Museum of the American Indian contained "several" instances of missing accent marks. Eponyms reflecting living memory can memorialize violent historic figures, such as [Confederate General] McCown's Longspur now named the Thick-billed Longspur (Driver, Bond 2021). The *Rubus mussolinii* blackberry was named for Mussolini but deemed merely a variant of

ulmifolia, but *Hypopta mussolinii* continues to memorialize Mussolini via a Libyan moth, and *Anophthalmus hitleri* memorializes Adolf Hitler through the scientific species name of a cave beetle (Heard 2020; Lidz 2023). While these forms of memorialization can indeed cause harm and elevate historically violent figures from the past into the ecological present, absence within the memorial landscape and memorialization more broadly can also commit violence. The “manifestation of willful ignorance or carelessness” when dealing with multiple languages or translations can reflect a written “racialization of language” (Callahan 2014, 103). The use of racially or colonially-coded fonts can obfuscate, or make absent, the written language of cultures (in this case, the diaereses, tildes, and acute accent often found within written Spanish; i.e. the ‘ó’ in Perón). As Callahan (2014) argues, while this can certainly impact meaning within translation, the symbolic value of this absence can have greater impacts.

In our capitalist society, seeds are a commodity, something that can be bought and sold like any other product. However, because of this, seeds are often forgotten within our food systems. This forgetting decreases the number of diverse food-based plant varieties regularly grown or sold (Nesbitt 2023). In fact, 93% of seed varieties of common foods are at risk of becoming lost (Veteto 2009). As we highlight below, the Peróns, while prominent across Argentine and global memorial landscapes, have likewise become lost within the contexts of their living memorials. By centering not only the posthumanism of these varieties but their political ecologies we hope to understand how “nature pushes back against its exchange value and perceived uselessness within capitalist systems” by isolating the devaluing, absence, and forgetting within our plant and food systems (Rhodes, Keeve 2023, 427).

3 The Peróns, Memorialized

María Eva Duarte de Perón (i.e. Eva Perón), commonly referred to as “Evita”, was born on 7 May 1919, in Los Toldos, Argentina, a small village outside of the nation’s capital, Buenos Aires. She moved to Buenos Aires in 1935 and was considered working class with limited opportunities and social mobility (Navarro 1977). Weinstein (2006, 170) writes,

[Eva Perón’s] lower-class origins were allegedly inscribed on her body and clothes, as well as in her discourse and ideology.

This changed when she met Juan Perón, who would eventually become her husband and the President of Argentina from 1944 until 1955 (Favor 2011). Eva rose to fame as the First Lady of Argentina. She used

her platform as the First Lady to advocate for women's rights and the working class, securing women's suffrage in 1947 and establishing the Peronist Women's Party (Hammond 2011; Navarro 1977).

Eva established the Eva Perón Foundation, which oversaw welfare programs focused on providing housing, schools, and medical care for women and children. One of her most notable achievements was the development of the Female Peronist Party, which worked to promote women's involvement in politics. For the first time, Argentine women were granted the right to vote with the passage of the Women's Suffrage Law in 1947 because of Eva Perón's political and cultural work. Although her efforts did not come without criticism for using state money to arguably boost her and her husband's (Blanksten 1953), she became known as a "myth of a spiritual leader" (Taylor 1981). Because of her influence and reputation as an advocate for social justice and women's rights, her legacy extended outside of Argentina to become an iconic figure internationally (Misemer 2008; Spaderna 2002). At the age of 33, Eva Perón's political career was cut short when she passed away from cancer on 26 July 1952. Despite her short life, her legacy left an everlasting mark on Argentine politics and society, including a wide landscape of monuments and memorials and the Eva Perón tomato (Del Rosario Betti 2006; Vega, Vohnsen 2021).

Eva Perón was considered to be one of the most powerful female figures in Argentina before her death in 1952. The Monument to Eva Perón, standing outside of the Fundación Eva Perón, in Buenos Aires is a representation of her power in politics, her contributions towards Argentina's working class and commemorates her status as a champion for social justice. The monument depicts Eva Perón standing on a large pedestal, her right arm raised, and expressively addressing a crowd. The monument portrays her as charismatic and powerful political figure and her relationship with the Argentine people. The statue also features plaques surrounding it that recognize Eva's moments in her early career as an actress, her relationship with Juan Perón and her political work to improve the lives of women and the working class. The plaques contain quotes from her political speeches that signify her impact on the lives of the people of Argentina both politically and socially. The monument honors Eva's legacy and her efforts to improve society.

Eva Perón advocated for women's empowerment and the working class. She portrayed herself *descamisada*, a woman of the poor countryside, to connect with the working-class people and maintain her relationship with the poor (Masut 2006). She also utilized her powerful voice, emotions, empathy, and ability to understand and argue for the struggles of women in society. Eva created her own image through her speeches and public image. Her popularity endures and continues to impact Argentinian politics. Argentina felt as if the former Peronist president, Alberto Fernández, who was

voted out of office in 2023, did not live up to the Perónism ideology during times of inflation and rising poverty rates in the country. Many people evoke Eva as a needed contemporary influence in promoting social mobility in Argentina in times of new presidential leadership (Poloti 2022).

Eva's life story and her work with Juan has been showcased in numerous books and artworks. Abroad, Eva's life story was told through the 1978 Broadway rock musical, *Evita*. The musical was so successful that it was followed by the publication of *Santa Evita* in 1995, which became a best-selling novel. These pieces of work sparked an interest in Evita around the world. Eva's image as an international icon was confirmed following the adaptation of musical *Evita* into a 1996 Hollywood film of the same name which featured the American singer, Madonna as Eva. A little more than a decade later in 2011, the film *Juan y Eva* was released and told the story of Eva and Juan's relationship and their efforts to improve the lives of those in Argentina (Vega, Vohnsen 2021). More recently, *Santa Evita* a Disney+ mini-series based upon Martínez's (1995) novel of the same name, streamed seven episodes in 2022. These works capture the impacts Juan and Eva had on society and commemorate their life and roles globally by highlighting their achievements and the legacies within Argentina's political landscape.

Juan and Eva's influence on Argentina is celebrated and remembered through public spaces like monuments, statues, and parks. These places serve as tangible reminders of how Juan and Eva impacted society and politics. They also serve as places where people can come together and honor their memory. Like any memorial, these landscapes simultaneously serve multiple purposes. First, memorials originate out of cultural and historical context in the space and time and in memory of those being memorialized. While memorials indeed shift in their meanings and interpretations over time, Lowen (1999) nonetheless argues that these original historical contexts and the originally implied motivations and meanings sustain throughout and even following the life of a memorial. Second, every memorial has a memorial entrepreneur, a figure or figures with social, political, and/or economic motivations for the continuation or creation of a specific collective memory (Jordan, 2006; Rhodes, Bartoszek 2024). Third, memorials do change, as do their broader assemblages and cultural contexts from which collective memory form. Stone weathers, metal corrodes, the surrounding landscapes shift, information can be added or retracted, responses can be built nearby or result in selective or holistic memorial destruction, and the very identities which shape and interpret the memorial from fluid and plural political and cultural perspectives also consistently shift. While statues and public art monuments, often found within urban centers, may be perceived as immovable, physically and culturally, many works explore the

inherent contentiousness of our memorial landscapes (McKittrick 2006; Heath-Kelly 2018; Steinberg 2022).

Argentina's capital, Buenos Aires is home to many memorials that are dedicated to Juan and Eva. The presence of the Peróns throughout Argentina is still felt. It is common for speeches, gatherings, and candlelight ceremonies to take place on the date of Evita's death, and the contributions she made has resulted in museums, statues, and monuments built in her legacy. The presidential palace, The Casa Rosada, or "The Pink House", is where Evita often addressed supporters of Peronists from the balcony. Today it allows visitors to take part in free tours and stand in the very spot from which Eva connected with and spoke to the people of Argentina. It was also the film location for the song released in honor of Eva, *Don't Cry for me Argentina*. Additionally, the palace features presidential regalia, campaign posters, and slogans all of which depict Perónism's impact on Argentina (Luongo 2012). The Museo Evita in Buenos Aires preserves the memory and legacy of Eva's work to improve the lives of women and children across Argentina. The museum was declared a National Historical Monument in 1999, and it now serves as a living museum where people can learn about and honor the life of one of the most influential women in Argentina's political history.¹ The General Confederation of Labor Building in Buenos Aires showcases an image of Eva in the center, which is lit by eternal flame. It is the site of Eva's corpse which was embalmed in and stored there until a monument in honor of Eva was constructed. The site continues to commemorate Eva Perón and her embalming through the museum's narratives (Luongo 2012).

Today Eva Perón's body lies in the Recoleta Cemetery in Buenos Aires, approximately 5 meters underground to protect her remains. Her memorial is a popular tourist attraction in Argentina and people honor her by leaving fresh flowers on notes on her tomb. On the anniversary of her death on 26 July, the tomb attracts crowds of thousands of people (Vega, Vohnsen 2021, 34). Until 1999, an official monument of Eva was nonexistent until finally a statue honoring her memory was placed at the National Library and called the Evita Monument. The bronze statue depicts Eva as the powerful and charismatic figure she was, striding forward to address a crowd of people. (Vega, Vohnsen 2021, 143). Along with the other living memorials that showcase Eva's lasting legacy, the monument stands as a symbol of her impact on Argentine society.

1 The Museo Evita's website is available at <https://museoevita.org.ar/>.

4 Evita Corn, Pumpkin, Squash, and Strawberry

Table 1 Results from webscraping websites offering or discussing Evita corn, pumpkin, squash, and strawberry varieties. Across 11 sites, none acknowledge either the Peróns’ or the varieties’ histories

	Evita corn, pumpkin, squash, and strawberry	Acknowledge Peróns	Acknowledge history or Argentina
Individual Websites	10	0	0
Etsy Listings	0	0	0
Amazon Listings	1	0	0
eBay Listings	0	0	0
Seeds Savers Exchange	0	0	0
Scholarly Texts	0	0	0
Total	11	0	0

Although we focus upon the commemorative tomatoes memorializing the Peróns, we did first explore the memorialization of the Evita corn, pumpkin, strawberry, and squash varieties. We performed data collection, first broadly using a Google search engine, and then specifically searching host sites, such as Seed Savers Exchange or Amazon, for any specific mention of these varieties. Across all four varieties, we only found 11 websites, none of which acknowledged Eva. Based upon the community-generated gardening website, Dave’s Garden, the only place Evita corn can be found online, the only two provided notes on the Evita corn indicate that it existed in 2009 and is a variety of sweet corn. We also found very little background information into the histories of these varieties: the squash is a Lebanese variety supposedly developed in 2005, and the Evita strawberry was registered with the USDA in 1995 following development by Peter Edward Vinson and Simon P. Warren in 1988 in the United Kingdom. We were relatively disappointed in the lack of data across all four varieties, which points little beyond the absence of Eva from these Evita varieties, with little additional information.

5 The Perón Tomato(es)

The Eva Perón tomato was developed by National University of Cuyo Professor Abelardo Piovano. However, like the previous four Evita variety results, our search for the Eva Perón tomato actually resulted in only a single result, a book published by the University mentioning the history of the tomato itself. The university text vaguely indicated that that the Eva Perón tomato was developed following Eva’s death

in 1952 (Meli 2017): "en homenaje a la primera dama, design con el nombre Eva Perón un tomete product de un cruzamiento" (in homage to the first lady, named a crossbreed tomato after Eva Perón; transl. by the Author).

While it is implied that the name followed Eva's death, that is uncertain. Following additional archival research, another history written about the faculty of the university (Tacchini 2018, 92) lists only two varieties as originating from Piovano's "ideología política" (political ideology): the "17th of October" and the "Eva Perón".

In addition to the Eva Perón tomato, the Juan Perón tomato is more commonly listed in seed catalogs. Data collection was performed across the same platforms using the keywords "Juan Perón" or "Perón" and "Tomato". While the Juan Perón sprayless tomato was noted 40 times and the Juan Perón tomato 13 times across different websites, none of them acknowledged who Juan Perón was nor the impacts he made. Research instead reveals that these two different varieties (the "Juan Perón" and "Perón Sprayless") are in fact one-in-the-same. Several websites even state that the Juan Perón tomato is "also called the Juan Sprayless Tomato". Both tomatoes are noted as being developed by Professor Abelardo Piovano at the National University of Cuyo in Argentina, the same developer and location and around the same era as the Eva Perón tomato. Looking further into what this may mean, we found that Glecklers Seedsmen introduced the Perón sprayless tomato variety in 1951, while the USDA lists the Juan Perón tomato as donated from a Mrs. James E. Winfield in Painted Post, New York on 4 April 1951. We find a consistent pattern of the Juan Peron tomato also being referred to as the "Juan Peron sprayless tomato". A Tomato Genetics Cooperative (1960) report further dates the variety to 1948 and identifies it under the name "J. Peron Argentine 1948 Resistant to disease". However, in December 1954, the USDA also records receiving a "Perón" variety of tomato from Professor Piovano. Going into the actual Gleckler 1951 seed catalog also revealed that the variety was not introduced as the Juan Peron tomato or the Juan Peron sprayless tomato, but simply the "Peron sprayless" tomato, referred to elsewhere in their same catalog as simply Peron. With these sources, it becomes quite obvious that these are both the same variety, but what of the Eva Perón tomato listed in the recorded histories of the same university which supposedly introduced the Peron sprayless? In neither text are a Juan Peron or a Peron sprayless tomato mentioned (Meli 2017; Tacchini 2018). Given that we were unable to find any mention definitely linking Abelardo to a variety other than Eva Perón; that all direct sources of Abelardo's contributions only ever say Peron, Perón, or Eva Perón; that Tacchini (2018) who further sought to link Abelardo's work to his political ideology only ever mentioned the Eva Perón tomato; and that there is no specific date given for when the

Eva Perón tomato originated as opposed to the Perón tomato, which we traced to 1948; we can confidently state that we believe that there is only a single Perón variety: the Eva Perón tomato.

In contrary addition to the complications of tracking down the history of the Perón tomato variety/varieties, the Evita tomato is clearly identified as a small heart-shaped “balcony” tomato developed by Blumen Eber, a German nursery. Based on our findings, only five sites list or mention the Evita tomato, and a similar silence with the Evita tomato follows the other one-to-four tomato varieties, with no mention of either Eva or the variety’s history.

Table 2 Web pages referencing the Juan Perón tomato and their acknowledgment of Juan Perón, history of the variety, or Argentina

	Juan Perón Tomato Sites	Acknowledgment of Juan Perón	Acknowledgment of history	Acknowledgment of Argentina
Individual Websites	4	0	3	3
Etsy Listings	1	0	0	0
Amazon Listings	0	0	0	0
eBay Listings	3	0	0	0
Seeds Savers Exchange	5	0	0	0
Scholarly Text	0	0	0	0
Total	13	0	3	3

Table 3 Web pages referencing the Perón sprayless tomato and their acknowledgment of the Peróns, history of the variety, or Argentina

	Perón sprayless tomato Sites	Acknowledgment of Juan or Eva Perón	Acknowledgment of history	Acknowledgment of Argentina
Individual Websites	31	0	26	25
Etsy Listings	1	0	1	1
Amazon Listings	0	0	0	0
eBay Listings	3	0	3	3
Seeds Savers Exchange	5	0	0	0
Scholarly Text	0	0	0	0
Total	40	0	30	29

Table 4 Web pages referencing the Evita tomato and their acknowledgment of Eva Perón

	Evita Tomato sites	Mention of Eva Perón
Individual Websites	4	0
Etsy Listings	0	0
Amazon Listings	1	0
eBay Listings	0	0
Seed Savers Exchange	0	0
Scholarly Text	0	0
Total	5	0

6 **A Present Absence**

While our original goal was to code and conduct a discourse analysis, following Rhodes and Keeve’s (2023) analysis of the Paul Robeson tomato, given the absence of data illustrating the ways in which Eva and Juan Perón are memorialized, we were unable to move forward as planned. And while we set out to understand how the Peróns are memorialized, we have raised additional questions as to why such a large data gap exists between the Paul Robeson tomato, which Rhodes and Keeve (2023, 433) identified 63 sources related to the tomato with 41 (65%) acknowledging Paul Robeson himself. We, on the other hand, found 69 sources, with only a single mention in an academic text. Of the 69 sites, only the academic source describing the history of the Eva Perón tomato includes an accent on the ‘o’ in Perón. Beyond representation, this data speaks to a failure of memorialization and a narrative of absence embedded into the more-than-human memory of Eva Perón. This absence intersects with ongoing considerations of eco-mourning and ecological loss in several ways. These absences also mirror the historical contexts of the more-than-human blurring of biographical and biological recognition, where racist and colonialist lenses of humanity were used to justify “political, social, and economic hierarchies” (Ives 2019, 2). Taking a step back, it is necessary to discuss why the Peróns are not acknowledged through plant-based food varieties named in their honor. After all, Eva was admired just as much as she was criticized and viewed as a controversial figure. Could this negative light shown on her perhaps interfere with how she is memorialized? Or could it be the fact that seed varieties such as those named after Eva and Juan are seen as commodities? And does this point toward diverse plant-based food varieties becoming lost as a result of an economy that is driven by capitalistic practices? Rose (2012, 130) situates

more-than-human memory within "generational time", which they state, "clearly involved both death and birth", however, that cyclical generational time includes such processes as "hatching, germinating, and sprouting". While commercialization certainly does not preclude, and can even fervent living memorialization processes (see Niala's 2023 work with a 1918 British allotment garden), it can corrode the generational time which drives heirloom, heritage, and landrace varieties of plants which were developed primarily for subsistence with rich historical and cultural contexts. The Paul Robeson tomato, for instance, is "unmarketable" because of the "tomato's physical inconsistencies" (Rhodes, Keeve 2023, 440). Unlike a Soviet-grown tomato with frequent "scarring, splitting, and disfigurement" (Rhodes, Keeve 2023, 426), the Argentine-grown Perón tomatoes were deliberately developed by and for agricultural science (Meli 2017). Capitalism, in this case, shapes the narratives of the Perón agricultural commodities rather than generational time embedded into the meanings and memories of heirloom varieties. While there are cases where commercialization and heritage blur within landscapes of heirloom conservation and education (i.e. Glover and Stone's 2018 work with Ifugao rice) or where the agency of plants actively resists the privatization of public commemorative spaces (Clope and Jones's 2004 work with cemetery trees) sociopolitical contexts and political economies do shape biographical and biological representation and narratives of life and death.

When considering that the memorialization of Eva could be lost due to her being recognized as a controversial figure, it would be unusual for her to be memorialized in multiple forms but not plant-based memorials because of her politics. Today, she continues to be remembered through statues, music, museums, movies, music, and political ideology. These forms of memorialization, alongside the broader urban fabric of Buenos Aires (streets, buildings, parks, and neighborhoods) commemorating Eva and Juan (Betti 2006) capture the lasting social and political impacts of the Peróns on Argentine society.

It is clear that Eva Perón is still an iconic figure who is actively memorialized in a plurality of formats. Future steps require additional archival research to further contextualize the development of these food-based plant varieties. Additionally, firmly identifying the history surrounding the naming of the Eva, Juan, and Perón sprayless tomatoes may offer additional context for their absence within these living memorial landscapes. In both cases of memorial absence and the broader ecological loss in the Anthropocene, we can point towards a possible capitalist root of violence.

7 Conclusion

This paper demonstrates the memorialization of Eva Perón and Juan Perón through living memorials, specifically focusing on the Eva Perón tomato and other food-based plant varieties named after them. Despite the significant impacts and historical significance of the Peróns, these living memorials fail to acknowledge their lived experience and the contexts surrounding how they impacted the lives of others. The lack of acknowledgment in the memorialization of the Peróns through these plant varieties raises questions about how influential figures are remembered and how their legacies are preserved and the intersecting role of industrial agriculture and capitalist foodways to not only strip away biodiversity and other environmental services but to make absent the very core of what makes an heirloom an heirloom: the living memory and heritage embedded within its story.

The concept of living memory involves the events, experiences, and people that are remembered and shape our understanding of the past, which is crucial in the preservation of legacies. Food-based plant varieties play a significant role in local cultures and communities, and their cultivation and exchange contribute to cultural traditions and the passing down of knowledge. However, in the case of Eva and Juan Perón, there is a lack of commemoration being passed on. This paper examines the memorialization of Eva and Juan Perón through the Evita tomato, corn, strawberry, squash, and pumpkin. It also explores the varieties named after Juan: the Juan Perón sprayless tomato and the Juan Perón Tomato and their connections to the no longer referenced Eva Perón tomato. By highlighting the lack of acknowledgment of these individuals and their historical significance, we find that their contributions are not properly represented through these varieties, despite Eva Perón's status and broader memorialization. Through this research, we understand the importance of recognizing and preserving the significance of influential figures like Eva and Juan Perón through living memorials, but also the significance of eco-mourning and how commemorating that biological, ecological, and more-than-human loss itself may now be necessary. This work calls for further investigation and examination of the gendered patterns observed in the memorialization of the Peróns through food-based plant varieties, but broader work into the role of foods and plants and their impacts on memory and heritage in the contexts of a post-human conceptualization of loss within the Anthropocene.

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