

Roberto Rivera V. "*El arte de no olvidar. Literatura testimonial en Chile, Argentina y Uruguay entre los 80 y los 90*". *Le Monde Diplomatique*. 3 de Julio, 2008. (translation)

Through the analysis of *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number* by Jacobo Timerman, and *The Little School* by Alicia Partnoy –(both Argentinean authors); of *Las manos sobre el fuego* (Hands on fire) by the Urugayan González Bermejo; of *Tejas verdes* (idem) and *Mis primeros tres minutos* (My first three minutes) by the Chileans Hernán Valdés and Emilio Rojas, Nora Strejilevich is able to study in depth and reveal that blurred region of kidnapping, torture, and disappearance. She unveils that place from which nobody returns and, precisely for this reason, which cannot take root in memory. This place may only be recovered in bits and pieces through the act of narrating testimony --the only way to recapture the truth of those who could escape from that unreality of massive horror, from that collective and brutal shock after which even memory walks out and gets lost.

In that space outside the official map where power experiments with the human condition, the camp, every distinction of our world collapses and gets blurred. The camp does not have to be understood as an isolated fact but as one of the clues of our contemporary world; as the game destined to erase identity and inject vacuum; the banality where, among other places, evil makes its home, exposes the complicity between those dictatorships and the “neoliberal” capitalist project, the close kinship between the exterminatory exclusion and the forthcoming social exclusion. What has happened isn’t what will not happen again, but what goes on happening as long as it is not understood that trials do not exhaust the problem. Truth bears a juridical consistency that goes beyond the law. This does not mean that the trials do not have to be pursued, since accepting moral responsibility has value only if one is ready to suffer legal consequences. Yet only through policies guided by an ethical demand that establishes basic distinctions shall we exit the grey zone in which our society swims since then (it passed right away from tragedy to farce), facilitating the appearance of a “refundational symbology.” This symbology will be meaningful for all members of society, not only for those directly affected. Once nothing is left in our memory from that block of ice, symbol of the immaculate Motherland installed in Spain, not even the cube for the last toast, justice will allow us to glimpse the horror of those who did not leave even one message, or a word, not even a body.

This book does not reach conclusions; it cannot. There is no science of pain and tragedy. Upon giving testimony, survivors acknowledge the political defeat –because one way of being in the world was murdered—but they refuse to accept an ethical defeat.