imaginarios textuales y visuales alternativos que revelan brechas espaciotemporales en las cuales pueden develarse continuidades de la dictadura en la posdictadura.

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**ANA FORCINITO:** *Los umbrales del testimonio: entre las narraciones de los sobrevivientes y las señas de la posdictadura.* Madrid and Frankfurt: Iberoamericana – Vervuert, 2012.

Testimony has emerged as a central focus for understanding individual and collective survival of trauma, political violence, and genocide. Understanding testimony as a dynamic, transformative process essential to survival is the subject of Ana Forcinito’s *Los umbrales del testimonio,* a book that arrives at a time when Argentina is undergoing significant changes in relation to its past of human rights abuses, with new trials underway and sites of memory established throughout the nation. The author focuses on the testimonies of ex-detainees and ex-political prisoners, survivors of Argentina’s 1976-1983 dictatorship that resulted in up to 30,000 disappeared. Years of impunity followed, during which testimony played a critical role in resisting official silence and injustice during impunity and after amnesty laws were overturned in 2003.

Forcinito presents a comprehensive overview of testimony as a dynamic social process for survivors of the dictatorship. In her first chapter, she introduces the overarching theoretical concept of “*umbrales*” (thresholds or borders) that survivors traverse in their testimonies. These *umbrales* exist between what is seen and not seen, the real and the phantasmal, truth and fiction, hero and disappeared, traitor and survivor, and more. Testimony becomes a zone of ambiguity, for those narrating and their interlocutors, revealing the persistent tensions at the core of representation (and representability), as listeners can transform into witnesses. Forcinito builds on important scholarship in studies of testimony, witnessing, representation, and subjectivity (Agamben, Beverley, Butler, Derrida, and Lacan), ideas she grounds in her detailed analysis of specific testimonies from Argentina in this first chapter (Strejilevich; Villani) and in those that follow. Testimonial *umbrales* offer possibilities for engagement and passage, though they can also present limits or borders to what is knowable – “testimonio nos deje frente a umbrales no siempre transitables.(36)”

In her second chapter, Forcinito provides important historical context for understanding the significance of testimony for democracy and redemocratization in Argentina, during three periods: the first years after dictatorship; the years of
impunity; and the years that followed the annulment of amnesty laws in 2003. She explores various testimonial genres, including the truth commission (*Nunca Más*), a journalistic account of a perpetrator’s confession (*The Flight*), and the archive *Memoria Abierta*. None of these testimonies are analyzed as exhaustive narratives, however; instead, Forcinito explores what these accounts also silence and the struggles of survivors with points of tension, like the *umbral* between hero/traitor. Testimony, then, is not static, but an evolving space for survivors to negotiate these tensions in various genres of narration, continuing to have relevance throughout the history of human rights and struggle against impunity in Argentina.

The third chapter examines testimonies of the ESMA (the Navy School of the Mechanics), a site of extensive torture and abuse during the military dictatorship, still central to the nation’s imaginary of that time (the space re-opened as the ex-ESMA, a site of memory and human rights). The ESMA testimonies engage the *umbral* between the juridical and (following Agamben) the state of exception (74). Miguel Bonasso’s narrative grapples with the *umbral* between hero and informer, while Marcelo Brodsky’s visual work engages the tension between demonstration and reflection (77). Together, these testimonies reveal the duality of the *umbral* – a space of contact and a limit (94), that also entails various “points of flight” (or fugas) (98). Although new human rights trials are underway related to abuses at the ESMA, Forcinito reinforces the significance of extra-judicial testimony to redemocratization.

In her fourth chapter, she examines sexual violence committed during the dictatorship, noting its absence in many official accounts and debates, a silence that represents “another type of impunity” (101) that rendered the sexualized body invisible (103). These testimonies reveal the “space of ambiguity” in their experience (113) as well as other *umbrales*, such as between victim and witness (116). Presenting a close analysis of the testimonies in *Ese infierno*, Forcinito notes that these women’s testimonies also exist on the thresholds of patriarchal cultures that fail to legitimize their experience (132).

The fifth chapter focuses on three testimonies that reveal the fragmentary nature of memory and truth (133). She argues that extra-juridical testimonies (in artistic and literary genres) help us reflect on memory and its limits, as well as rethink post-dictatorship identity construction. The fundamental *umbral* at work in the selected testimonies hinges on truth and the legitimacy of narrative – including Strejilevich’s use of multiple voices (135-136), and the inclusion of testimony and fiction in the other accounts, such as *The Little School*. What emerges is a “double invitation” (154) – to read these inevitably incomplete voices while also reflecting on the inability to ever fully represent that which is lost.
Her final concluding chapter explores testimony in relation to the threshold of pain and absence (the “spectral”, following Derrida) – sustaining the tension between what is visible and invisible, what is possible to engage and what is not, through the various *umbrales* traversing testimonies.

This volume contributes in significant ways to understanding testimony’s continuing relevance for survivors of the dictatorship and redemocratization in Argentina. It also contributes to theoretical understandings of testimony and survival, in addition to memory studies in the wake of political violence and trauma. Indeed, Forcinito’s analysis of multiple *umbrales* in Argentine testimonies (as manifested in various testimonial genres) helps us reflect on the processual nature of truth, testimony, and survival itself. However, while she explores the value of the concept *umbral* for studying testimony in her analysis, it would be helpful to further reinforce how the progression of chapters helps develop the argument overall.

As the trial process continues in Argentina, this sustained attention to the social significance of testimony (in juridical and non-juridical spaces) will be important. As Forcinito describes so comprehensively, the experience is never fully resolved and the *umbrales* continue to exist – representing both possibilities for meaningful engagement, as well as limits to full understanding. This also underscores that although the trauma of that past is not fully resolved and may not be, the value resides in the ongoing work of testimonial practices to help shape the subjectivity of survivors and Argentina’s democracy.

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Never mind the footnotes, the caveats, the sadly necessary literature review. Strip out the sometimes clumsy language and the glib-sounding title and cut to the heart of the matter. Natalia Milanesio has written that most wondrous of things, a history monograph that would make excellent television. This is social history with analytic heft and narrative drive. Hollywood should option it tomorrow. Consider this: The boom in popular consumption spurred by Peronist policies came at the very moment that Argentine executives took over the local advertising agencies, displacing the previous envoys from New York. Ad men and empowered workers were as important in the dreamworld of Argen-