

Unit 6 Memory is a Verb

IIIB *Cartas*/letters to the Repressor



Photo Courtesy of
Nicolás Demarchi

Fernando Traverso, famous for his stenciled *bicis*, also stencils *cartas* or *letters* on the doorsteps of people who have committed crimes against humanity. *00350 Documentación y Producción artística* has a gallery of *cartas*, many of which have been stenciled during *escraches*, or public shamings. *Escraches*, social condemnations of crimes that have gone without state condemnation, were begun by H.I.J.O.S (Hijos por la identidad y la Justicia contra la Olvido e el Silencio/Children for Identity and Justice and Against the Forgotten and the Silence), children of the families of the disappeared during El Proceso.

1. Study the photograph of a stenciled *carta*, then describe what you see.

2. How does this photograph make you feel?

3. What questions do you have about the picture?

4. Write your impressions of the photograph. Think about the following questions:

- Why are the words blurred?
- What is the message?
- Why are envelopes stenciled on the doorstep?
- Who might have created the stencils?
- Who might live at this address?
- How might the person who lives at this address feel about the stenciled letter?

Essay prompt

Imagine that you are the relative of someone who disappeared during *El Proceso*. Recently you learned that one of the Dirty War repressors lives at this address and you stencil an envelope on the doorstep. What would you write in the letter?

Search for information about both the repressors prominent during *El Proceso* and the victims. Select one victim and one repressor from the links below; then write a creative letter expressing your thoughts. Incorporate information you have learned during this unit of study on Argentina from 1976 to 1983 in your letter. Use the list of resources provided, the internet and the school library to research information.

5. Record your research notes and sources below.

Essay: Letter to the repressor

6. Read *An Open Letter to My Grandson or Granddaughter* (1995) by Juan Gelman, poet
<http://www.lettersofnote.com/2015/10/i-would-like-to-give-you-your-own.html>
Reflect on his life and the fate of his family. Think about a difficult situation you may have faced. How did you fare? What did you do to carry on? How do you think you would cope with the adversity Gelman faced? What techniques or coping skills do you think you can use to go forward?

