

## Producing bodies and building memories

### Notes on the video film “*Plan Rosebud: on images, sites and politics of memory*” (2006-2008)

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#### PART 1: THESES ON MEMORY

“There has never been a document of culture, which is not simultaneously one of barbarism. And since it itself is not free from barbarism, neither is the process of transmission from one to another. That is why the historic materialist distances himself from it as far as possible. He regards it as his task to brush history against the grain.”

Walter Benjamin, *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, 1940

“There has never been a document of culture, which is not simultaneously one of barbarism,” states Walter Benjamin in his *Theses on the Philosophy of History*. Under the shadow of the responsibility of these words, which are nowadays the epitaph on his grave in Portbou (Girona), Spain, I started to work with a group of people and with the production support by the CGAC (Galician Centre for Contemporary Art) in Santiago de Compostela, on *Plan Rosebud* in March 2006. In that period we were experiencing the commemoration of the Year of the Memory and the effervescence of the debate about the so-called *Ley de Memoria Histórica* (The Historical Memory Act). Spain’s Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) government has declared 2006 the Year of Historical Memory and has submitted a “law of historical memory” to the country’s Congress for ratification. For the first time the mass killings committed by General Francisco Franco’s fascist regime (1939–1975) are described as “unjust.” The law was confirmed by the parliament with a very thin margin, on the 26<sup>th</sup> December, 2007, and we attended many (well deserved) tributes to the victims that the terrorism of the Franco regime imprisoned and left unburied in the ditches. The so-called historical memory fully entered into to political and electoral agendas with an unusual intensity since the 1970s.

Our purpose, from the very beginning, was not, nevertheless, to make a documentary with a historical or informative value, nor to commemorate or encourage the new epic narratives surrounding the republican remembrance, but we tried to elaborate a critical mapping of the so called *politics of memory*,<sup>1</sup> to investigate about the ways of transmission and/or imposition of historic memory (not lived or remembered, but transmitted and/or imposed through the different forms of the politics of memory: education, commemorations, memory sites, symbols...), and to reflect upon its different strategies and mediators in Galicia, and therefore in the Spanish state. We were focusing our attention very specially on the representation as well as on the control devices on bodies and subjectivities during the long dictatorship of the general Franco and the Transition period.<sup>2</sup> Besides, we wanted to do it establishing comparisons with other

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<sup>1</sup> I refer to the terminology used by Katharine Hodgkin, and Radstone Susannah (eds.), *Memory, History, Nation. Contested Pasts*, London and New Brunswick, Transaction Publishers, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> The Spanish transition to democracy was the era when Spain moved from the dictatorship of Francisco Franco to a liberal democratic state. The transition is usually said to have begun with Franco’s death on November 20, 1975, while its completion has been variously said to be marked by the Spanish

European states, especially Great Britain, in order to discover which specificities and resemblances, in case there were any, Spain had in relation with its most immediate context.

According to that different tone, *Plan Rosebud* wanted to get closer to a visual essay, a distanced gaze, though not objective (since no research is, nor can be); it wanted to propose questions more than providing answers. Following the thread of the social debate, reflected in the last years by the media, but that never in fact fade away we meant to ask about (or) to question: Why should now we awake memories that seemed to be asleep? Which memories were to be remembered and to which purpose? Which characteristics share the politics of memory of the Spanish state with those of other states, apparently very different due to their different heritage and legal frameworks? In which way the history of the Spanish Civil War (especially in Galicia) can be related to the later developments in Europe? To what extent is this historic memory act related to the transitional and post-transitional processes in Latin-American's former dictatorships, or to the management of memory in the former Eastern European countries? And, how and in what ways and in which places the old and the new grammars of the state memory have been formed and based on?<sup>3</sup>

According to the definition provided by Maurice Halbwachs in the forties in its seminal work *The collective memory*,<sup>4</sup> the state and other supra-state institutions (for example, the church or big multinational corporations nowadays) carry out a process of institutional elaboration that “distils” the different personal memories to generate a *collective memory* that could be shared by the community. Following the same idea, he defines *historic memory* as that borrowed memory, transmitted institutionally to the individuals regarding facts or actions that are not experienced personally. This process can be develop as an imposition (in a dictatorship, for example) or as an agreement based on the pact of representation (as a parallel to parliamentary representative democracy) that is supposed to legitimate politicians in a democratic state. This memory shared by the majority is at the same time in many cases a biased and partial memory that fulfils the interests of the dominating group, a *hegemonic memory* (if we make a reference to the term by Gramsci). Opposite to many authors that consider memory as an exclusively personal dimension, Halbwachs is the unquestionable pioneer of the articulation of the concept of *collective memory* that he clearly distinguishes from the *hegemonic memory* that was explained beforehand, by considering the fact individuals remember according to their social adscription.<sup>5</sup>

In an attempt to reflect on the recent past, it seems clear that the legitimacy of the Franco state was achieved by a process of brutal repression on the memories and the bodies of those men and women that did not share the values of the National-Catholicism with fascist tones put forward by the dictatorship. As Paloma Aguilar

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Constitution of 1978, the failure of Antonio Tejero's attempted coup on February 23, 1981, or the electoral victory of the socialist PSOE on October 28, 1982.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Paloma AGUILAR FERNÁNDEZ, in *Las políticas hacia el pasado. Juicios, depuraciones, perdón y olvido en las nuevas*, A. Barahona de Brito y C. González Enríquez, eds., Madrid, Istmo, 2002.

<sup>4</sup> Maurice HALBWACHS, «Fragmentos de “Collective memory,” in *Revista de Cultura Psicológica*, núm. 1, México D. F., 1991; original *La mémoire collective*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1950.

<sup>5</sup> Paloma AGUILAR FERNÁNDEZ, *Políticas de la memoria, memorias de la política*, Madrid, Alianza Editorial, 2008, pp. 43–48.

properly explained in *Memoria y olvido de la Guerra Civil española*,<sup>6</sup> the Franco regime deposited in the Civil War, re-elaborated as a crusade, the legitimisation of the regime and the justification of its actions. When this legitimacy was questioned, the memory of the war sprang up (accompanied by death penalties and/or some acts to consolidate order) in order to provide a moral alibi and to revive fear as a basic tool for control. According to the author, the *hegemonic memory*, even if it is known to be false, it still had an important role in decision taking even after the death of the dictator. This continues use and re-use of the (old and new) memories and the oblivion can explain, among other things, the silence of the state regarding the victims of the repression and the distortion of the republican memory, a silence that remains even when the PSOE took over the Government in October 1982. Nor then nor now, as it happened in South Africa, Chile or Argentina, a “truth commission” has been proposed in order to try to compensate, at least symbolically, the victims and clearly differentiate responsibilities. And we should not forget that the amnesty laws, both the one from 1976 as well as the one from 1977 and the subsequent dispositions that completed them, not only did not consider this possibility, but they cancelled and closed the path to any possible legal action on the perpetrators.

It was not until the 20th November 2002 when the national parliament recognised and condemn (without unanimity though) that the Spanish Civil War started with a *coup d'état* with which the republican political force on power in the parliament at that time (that was enjoying the majority in the *parliament* and was democratically elected) was overthrown. It took twenty-seven years after the death of General Franco to state this.

Maybe, trying to legislate the memory is simply absurd and this law, as recently explained by Ms. Teresa Fernández de la Vega, Spain Vice-President, will only be useful to “continue the spirit of the Transition period,” and would be no more than an overexposure needed to reaffirm oblivion, to bury even deeper the voices of the ghosts, that are still there in the *sites of memories*. It is probable that right now we are generating narratives that will be consumed into a new homogeneous and blunt memory. Because, which memories do we want to be recovered? Will they be finally plural, or will they only gather those memories that help the franchise-states to reaffirm their status, those that help the negation of antagonisms (of class, gender and various normative statements) and reaffirm sentimentality and heroism?

It is only necessary to review the beginning of modernity, and above all, the two great wars of the last century and their subsequent consequences to check how the contemporary memory policies use representation, media and, in general, cultural and educative policies, as their most fertile territories. There is no contemporary state, totalitarian or democratic, that forgets nor ignores the more or less direct relationship with the media, art and cinema, whether through visibility policies, or, in most extreme cases, with direct control strategies onto these policies.

All of us know that for decades, a successful Hollywood film, a literary best seller or a TV series influence much more powerfully the elaboration of our memory than any historiographic production, even though they lack rigour and they are clearly refuted by historians or researchers. As a result, thinking of museums (we must not forget that *Plan Rosebud* is produced by a museum), cinema, press, television or, in the last years,

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<sup>6</sup> Paloma AGUILAR FERNÁNDEZ, *Memoria y olvido de la Guerra Civil española*, Madrid, Alianza Editorial, 1996.

internet, *as devices and privileged sites of memory* (whether they are public or private corporations) it would be not any audacity, even though they are far from the classic denomination of Pierre Nora<sup>7</sup> as *sites of memory*, as physical or symbolic places, commemorations or actualizations, agreed basically by the State or para-State institutions and accepted as such by the majority in the society.

If we consider that the writing of history and its representations are part of the history itself,<sup>8</sup> it is, nevertheless indispensable to distinguish that not all the writings of and on history and/or the memory share the same principles nor purposes. As it is very well explained by Talens and Santos Zunzunegui in *Rethinking Film History*, we could distinguish at least three different kinds of representational narratives of history: the mirror (based on chronological linearity and on the reverse angle shot, positivist, universalistic, individualistic and heroic; they would respond to the prototype of cinema and the hegemonic-state media aiming to “fix the past” by naturalizing it); the cartographic (based on the depth of field, diachronic and concentrated, that rejects universality and concentrates on specific cases by studying them very deeply; it could correspond to those understood as memory accounts); and the diagrammatic (based on editing and archaeological-essayistic, that understands history as an ephemeral and perishable construction, generated from the present through the collision of fragments; authors provide as the example of this kind the well known *Histoire(s) du cinéma*, by J. L. Godard).<sup>9</sup>

*Representing History and representing memory* are shown as different concepts, with different uses, even though closely linked. But, are they really divergent territories or do they have more contact points than those we could discover in a first definition? Because, firstly, we can not ignore that nowadays the franchise-states have a limited power in the new global capitalist regime and its representation; as with many other symbolic territories, representation is a very important economic product, and therefore susceptible to certain “relative autonomy” with respect to the interests of the nation-state as it was a case some decades ago. And secondly, and not less importantly, as remembered by Talens and Zunzunegui, neither is it possible to make a division between both types of narratives, since both share, apart from their differences, a common visual regime and a common escopic framework that transcends, many times, its first political intentions.<sup>10</sup>

## PART 2: PLAN ROSEBUD

“Our sentence does not sound severe. The law which a condemned man has violated is inscribed on his body with the Harrow. This Condemned Man, for example,” and the Officer pointed to the man, “will have inscribed on his body, ‘Honour your superiors.’”

Franz Kafka, *In the Penal Colony*, 1919

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. Pierre NORA, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire ” in *Representations*, num. 26, L. A. University of California, 1989.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Hayden WHITE, *Metahistoria*. México D. F., Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2001.

<sup>9</sup> Jenaro TALENS and Santos ZUNZUNEGUI, *Rethinking Film History*. Valencia, Episteme, 1985, pp. 16–22.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Jenaro TALENS and Santos ZUNZUNEGUI, op. cit.

As we have already stated in our initial proposal, starting a project with the last words of a dead person and doing it with the powerful image of an icon of contemporary cinematography as *Citizen Kane*, by Orson Welles (1941), is, in itself a declaration of principles that already locates the frameworks of our film project. Invoking Rosebud<sup>11</sup> is to call upon the ghosts, it is a call for a dissent and for the memory as contradiction and dis-encounter; it means doubting, from the beginning, about a possibility of a *collective memory* in an any univocal sense and showing, through the filmic text, its fragmentation, constructive fragility, always united and as well changing from the perspective of the present. Calling for Rosebud, then, means from the very start a decision for an audiovisual and textual research, that will find in the images and therefore, in the study of documents and monuments, its research tools.

*Plan Rosebud* has 2 parts *Plan Rosebud 1* is long 114minutes and *Plan Rosebud 2* is long 120 minutes.<sup>12</sup> Both parts are structured into four chapters and three intervals.

### **Plan Rosebud 1: Crime scene**

*Plan Rosebud 1* is focused on the recent social debate around “The Historical Memory Act” in Spain, and the current relations between the sites of memory and the politics of memory that are produced through cultural industries. They are studied in details, in our case, through war tourism and commemorative tourism. In *Plan Rosebud 1* we visit Museums and Commemorative Historical War Sites and these materials form the main part of *Plan Rosebud 1*. This study, is not only limited to the Spain, and especially to the Spanish province of Galicia (where I, and General Franco were born), but it is presented as a comparative study with war and commemorative tourism site in Great Britain and Normandy as the European memory policy site of the WWII. The reason to choose Great Britain as more significant comparative variable was related to the fact that Britain is a well established European democracy with a completely different past from the one we have inherited from the Franco dictatorship and, nonetheless, as we discovered throughout the process, we have much more similar dynamics than expected in terms of links between cultural industries and production of memory (as an unstoppable and supra-state phenomenon due to economic globalisation). The politics of memory is in fact equally selective in relation to episodes that may contradict or question the compact and linear heroic narratives that are transmitted by the state or the media (I am referring, for example, to the very low interest in research about the condition of German and Italian prisoner in detention camps in the United Kingdom until very recently).

The three intervals in *Plan Rosebud 1* developed further privileged topics already exposed in the initial draft of making of the film: the construction and control of the body by different control bodies, whether by repression or trough the legislation of social politics; capitalizing on the past and the deconstruction of historic mythologies transmitted through the politics of memory; and, lastly, but centrally to the film, the

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<sup>11</sup> *Citizen Kane* traces the life and career of Charles Foster Kane, a man whose career in the publishing world is born of idealistic social service, but gradually evolves into a ruthless pursuit of power. Narrated principally through flashbacks, the story is revealed through the research of a newspaper reporter seeking to solve the mystery of the newspaper magnate’s dying word: “Rosebud.”

<sup>12</sup> The video film *Plan Rosebud: on images, sites and politics of memory* has 2 parts, Part 1 is 114 min long (DigiBeta + DVD PAL), 2008 and Part 2 is 120min long (DigiBeta + DVD PAL), 2008.

relationship of cinema with the construction of personal and collective memories and of historic narratives, especially visible in some film examples collected by us in images and as statements, that were used in collision or for reaffirmation of the topic. We refer to films as *Esa pareja feliz* (1951) by Luis G. Berlanga and Juan Antonio Bardem, or *The longest day* (1964) by Darryl F. Zanuck.

Now returning to the question of Museums and Commemorative Historical War Sites in *Plan Rosebud I* I can say that this topic we elaborated around the current reuse of camps and penitentiary colonies situated in Galicia (the graveyard of Ourense and the San Simón island in Vigo), Great Britain (Eden Camp, World War II prisoner of war camp, in Malton, North Yorkshire, current site of the Museum of the Peoples War) and as well in an filmed itinerary related to the current tourism industry in Low Normandy, that was established on five beaches where the Battle of Normandy in took place in 1944, Pointe du Hoc and the village of Sainte-Mère-Èglise. All is transformed in an open-air museum connected with D-Day.

Memory as political instrument, as a tool for the building of the state, but also, as Jorge Blasco explains in *El arte turístico de la memoria*,<sup>13</sup> memory as a fetish, memory as an object of mediation of a trip, even though it is a trip to a crime scene, and a scenario of repression or war. As that unspeakable tourist situated behind the camera, maybe none of us could stand the confrontation with death scenarios, and that is why, more that in any other place, the *souvenir*, not the memory, is transformed into the transitional object. The sites of memory, those that, according to Pierre Nora, the civil society or the state (or both) consider important symbolic territories for the development and maintenance of the *collective memory*,<sup>14</sup> have been converted, decades ago, into a complementary part or/and central parts of tourist itineraries. Whether it is in the form of memorials, tombs, battle scenarios, archives or documents, the conversion into a thing of memory introduced in the capitalist system follows an ascending path.

Visiting these territories of the past for our experience and research has had a strange quality of authenticity: how is it possible to preserve the few rests of the concentration camps, the precarious footprints in the penitentiary colonies or the few working camps that still persist? Is it necessary to transform them into museums or should we reuse them, changing and revitalising them, even at the cost of making them into tourist places?

But if we wanted to talk about sites of memory and its current adoptions of new meanings, we had to go to visit the most controversial in the Spanish state, built for the dictator Franco in order to host his remains and presented as a “reconciliation place.” *Plan Rosebud I* present our recordings of the 31<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the death of the general Franco on the 18<sup>th</sup> November, 2006, the last act that was allowed in the Valle de los Caídos<sup>15</sup> before the approbation of the memory act. If for a moment we could think that the Spanish state had completely forgotten the dictatorship heritage and the social order

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<sup>13</sup> See BLASCO, Jorge: “El arte turístico de la memoria”, in *Tour-ismos: La derrota de la disensión*. Fundació Tàpies, Barcelona, 2004.

<sup>14</sup> NORA, Pierre, op.cit.

<sup>15</sup> The Valle de los Caídos (in English: *Valley of the Fallen*) is a monumental memorial near Madrid, conceived by Spanish dictator Francisco Franco to honour those who fell during the Spanish Civil War. However, only two names are commemorated – those of José Antonio Primo de Rivera and Franco himself. It was also claimed by Franco that the monument was meant to be a “national act of atonement.” As a surviving artifact of Franco's rule, the monument and its Catholic basilica remain controversial, especially due to the manner and circumstances of its construction (built by political prisoners).

that puts it into a scene, these images not only show the resistance of a small but noisy group of nostalgic, but they also provide a context, and we do think this is worrying, for revisionist positions of the parliamentary right wing, while at the time they show a social substrate, if not of ultra-conservatives, at least of passive, that still thinks that it is better “not to stir the past” and that the Transition period cannot be put to an end.

## **Plan Rosebud 2: Calling the ghosts**

The second part of the film focuses specifically on the Spanish Transition period and on its cultural context, as well as on the last years of the British labour period in the 1970s and the arrival on power of the conservative leader Margaret Thatcher. It tries to dismantle, through analysis of some specific cases of social movements and productions of popular culture, the idea of Transition as a pact among elites; the official discourse, teleological that united the political class that “saved,” with Adolfo Suárez (prime minister of Spain from July 1976 until January 1981, and secretary-general of General Franco’s official political movement the National Movement) and the king of Spain Juan Carlos being at the front of the political elite pact, the Spanish state from a new civil war thus making possible the “peaceful” change toward a democratic regime. This is what is presented, for example, in the most famous mythological-media account, in the series *La Transición española*, directed by the journalist Victoria Prego in the first years of the socialist government of Felipe González (Former Prime Minister of Spain, 1982 – 1996).<sup>16</sup>

Again, the epic discourse, built through the media and certain kind of cinematography, distorts, from our point of view, the real work and the maturity of a civil society that, for decades had been sustaining a resistance more or less covered against the repressive and instrumentalizing strategies implemented by General Franco dictatorship. We aim here at studying popular culture in its relation with different social forces that were protagonist of the political change (from the union movements to the feminist movement, through neighbours associations or the collectives of gays and lesbians). We analysed why and how certain images of the militant cinema that show the collective effort of these fights have been removed or even indirectly censored to make it possible for the triumphal narrative to take part; the individualist and linear narrative that we all have learnt through television, or through press especially those that are widely distributed.

The three intervals in *Plan Rosebud 2* develop specifically a critical vision of these cultural and media strategies, focusing on the informative policies, on the promotion of popular music in relation to the social context and on the almost complete disappearance of the militant cinema and its ways of production and distribution. I talked here for example, of the cases of Carlos Varela and the Colectivo de Cine de

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<sup>16</sup> In the 1977 at the general elections after the death of Franco, Felipe González, was elected to the Spanish Parliament for Madrid. In 1978, he became Vice-President of the Socialist International, a position he held until 1999. In 1982, the PSOE gained a majority in Parliament and González was elected President of the Government, where served three consecutive terms until leaving office in 1996. Under González’ Spain entered the European Union in 1986.

Clase in Spain, and of Cinema Action or Berwick Street Film Collective (1970-1978)<sup>17</sup> in Great Britain.

In this case, the comparative analysis with Great Britain is especially interesting, because on the one hand for the Spanish cultural producers in the 1970s and 1980s, London was an inevitable reference (especially for the musicians of the so-called “Movida”), as well as because the social parallelism that was possible to establish with Britain due to the economic crisis suffered during the Pre- Thatcherism and in the time of Thatcherism. This period had a late reflection in the restructuring of the steel industry in Spain and as well the cycle of social struggles in the 1980s that Thatcherism is possible to connect with the cycle of protests that had started in the late period of Franco regime with serious consequences for the working class (deaths, imprisonment and strong retaliation).

*Plan Rosebud 2* proposes a continuation with the context of the first part of the film *Plan Rosebud 1*. and they show a similar process, from the current context, of some specific sites.

The physical and temporal spaces of *Plan Rosebud 2* are formed by sites and happenings such as at the wolfram mines of Casaio and Fontao (Galicia) and their relationship with the economic and business policy in the period of Franco regime. Between both spatial and temporal territories, the British and the Spanish, there is a light but common conceptual line. There is a parallelism between the military bases established in Europe from the policy designed by the Cold War (Estaca de Bares<sup>18</sup> and Greenham Common,<sup>19</sup> to be more specific). There is a connection in between the repression exerted on the workers in Great Britain and in the Spanish state during the seventies and eighties (and specifically, the workers protests of the 10<sup>th</sup> March 1972 in Ferrol, Galicia; in order to preserve the memory of the workers who died on 10 March 1972, the democratic trade unions had named the 10<sup>th</sup> March 1972 as the anniversary of celebration of the Working class Day in Galicia). Last but not least there is the cycle of struggles and the possibility of appropriation of our own bodies and subjectivities that was brought by the different feminist movements and the different movements of gays and lesbians during the decades of the Transition and the Pre-Thatcherism.

As I commented at the beginning of this essay, the forms of control by the state on our bodies and our subjectivities (what Michel Foucault named as *biopolitics*) draw important intersections between both landscapes even though their display evident

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<sup>17</sup> The best known of Berwick Street Film Collective productions is *The Nightcleaners, Part 1* (1975), conceived originally as a campaign film about attempts to unionise women working at night as contract cleaners in large office blocks. The film was several years in the making, emerging eventually as a landmark work of British political cinema and of collective and feminist film-making.

<sup>18</sup> Punta de Estaca de Bares is the northernmost point of mainland Spain, located in Galicia. There are currently two abandoned military sites there. One was operated by the US Coast Guard since the early 1960's as a LORAN (Long Range Aid to Navigation) Station. The station at Estaca de Bares operated jointly with stations operated by the British Government in East Blockhouse, Wales and, until 1973, the French Government in Pospoder, France. In 1978, after the Coast Guard ended the LORAN operations, the US Air Force assumed control of the base. The Air Force operated a communications site until 1991, and it now sits in ruins.

<sup>19</sup> RAF Greenham Common is a former World War II and NATO Cold War airfield located 72 km west of London. During World War II it was used by the United States Army Air Force and the Royal Air Force, and during the Cold War by the United States Air Force for Strategic Air Command bombers and later for BGM-109G cruise missiles.



differences. If between the 1930s and the 1950s the repressive Spanish state policy (with the established concentration camps and the penitentiary colonies as clearer examples of this policy) dominated the society with brutal strategies implied onto the individual and social bodies (especially onto the women's bodies), in the 1960s and 1970s we can observe how the collective social body changes with the entry of tourism and global capitalism. But it will be above all with the death of the dictator Franco that this collective body will go "high," as a transvestite will go to parties and into an ecstatic digression that seemed to bury forever the National-Catholicism of the dictatorship and its never ending heritages. Nevertheless the arrival of the AIDS pandemics some years after of the "failed" (or maybe not?) military coup d'état on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1981,<sup>20</sup> presented a brutal return to order.

The states (and in this case, the Spanish state) use this pandemics as a metaphor of the social disorder, as a repressive instrument with intense conservative flavour in the middle of the 1980s. Again, control policies appear, even though in a different way: prevention changed into protectionism, and political and sexual autonomy changed into a postmodern social democracy that was governed by a new PSOE that redesigned a new Spain under the sign of oblivion and consensus. This same renewed PSOE is today getting hold of the republican symbolic capital that it has previously rejected, and has today elaborated a poor memory law, that does nothing but revalidate again the transitional pact under the severe look of the Partido Popular.<sup>21</sup>

Apparently silenced, patiently expectant, the ghosts of our disremembering have been wandering through the home stories of our grandmothers, in films and novels a long before the death of the dictator. Nevertheless, as Tzvetan Todorov writes accurately in *Los abusos de la memoria*, the calling of the ghosts can not be an obligation, because "recovering the past is, in a democratic period, a legitimate right, but must not be turned into a duty (...) The right to forget exists as well."<sup>22</sup> Forgetting and remembering are part of the permanent construction process of memory, and it would be cruel to condemn, from public or private instances those who have lived facts so many times that became traumatic to permanently remember.

Therefore, if the State should not be memory unique depositary, nor its unique transmitter, are we, the civil society, not the ones to have then a certain "duty" toward memory? As the quote from Walter Benjamin in the beginning of this essay suggests that heads this text suggested, our intention in this complex and long working process was to "to brush history against the grain," calling and listening to the ghosts, and discovering amongst the ruins, narratives less ordered and compact, more diffuse and organic, that may make possible other histories. If we have managed to transmit to you some of these questions and suspicions, and thus contributing to the debate about our current context of the politics of memory, our main objective can be reached.

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<sup>20</sup> Antonio Tejero Molina, a Spanish former Lieutenant-Colonel, was the most visible figure in the attempted coup d'état against the Spanish democracy on.

<sup>21</sup> The People's Party (Spanish: Partido Popular, PP) is the main right political party in Spain. The People's Party was a refoundation of the Popular Alliance (Spanish: Alianza Popular, AP), a party led and founded by Manuel Fraga Iribarne, a former Minister of Tourism during Francisco Franco's régime.

<sup>22</sup> Tzvetan TODOROV, *Los abusos de la memoria*. Barcelona, Paidós, 2000 (p. 25).

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**For additional information:**

[http://www.proxecto-edicion.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=31&Itemid=193](http://www.proxecto-edicion.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=31&Itemid=193)

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