THE RULES OF THE GAME

17.03–04.09.2022

MARÍA RUIDO

María Ruido, *ElectroClass*, 2011 (video still).
Courtesy of the artist and Galería Rosa Santos

DISPOSSESSIONS SILENCED

Imma Prieto

I am unaware if a recollection can be created from an expecting presence, a youthful gaze challenging silence without wishing to. Perhaps we could imagine a young girl, sitting at a table in small, humble dining room. A girl having a snack after getting home from school, before doing her chores. A girl who observes in silence, who does not speak too much to avoid bothering anyone. Around her, daily life continues: a woman gives her something to eat, overwhelmed with dinners, lunches and the laundry. The woman could be her mother, or another mother, especially if her mother is working in one of the factories on the limits of the industrial area. This girl has been raised amidst other people's conversations, aware of how expensive it is to live and the harshness of working conditions. Over the years, that girl could be educated in other places and spaces where the home had come into contention. Her gaze could come to rest on other bodies and languages. Her certainty was to be inhabiting other lives that were different from those that had seen her grow up in everyday domestic spaces.

"The Rules of the Game" is the name of the new work that the artist María Ruido has presented in dialogue with the writer Brigitte Vasallo. This audiovisual installation invites viewers to occupy or inhabit (depending on the previous experience of each individual) a space where we encounter an interchange of memories, referring without qualms to the concept of social class. Just as well, the exhibition includes various works that María Ruido has created over her career: *La memoria interior* [The Inner Memory] 2002), *Tiempo real* (Real Time, 2003), *Ficciones anfibias* [Amphibious Fictions] (2005) and *ElectroClass* (2011). The exhibition is complemented by various of the scripts of her films, with a diagram created specifically for this show and

the intervention of some of her collages in public space. The overall body of work allows us to reflect in greater depth on the need and timeliness of continuing to speak about social classes, and what it means to move within a perverse space that leads to class being dispossessed.

In the context of this subtle distinction, multiple modifications have been developed that point to declassing as a way to survive in a world that requires you to censure other bodies that have accompanied you. The dispossession of something that feeds your origins is obligatory if, in returning what others never had, you are obliged to uphold that gain (here we find an initial contradiction), understood as a promise or a threat: "You must live the life that I never had." Declassing does not only involve enjoying other economic and social conditions, but also means assuming a certain normativity that cuts short the possibility of internal movement, blinding and cancelling something that belongs to you. Gesture and language must correspond to a new performativity of a fully political nature, speaking of the place you are called on to occupy.

Throughout history, the norms that have objectified our bodies have undergone transformations, however much the female body is the place where all kinds of disquisitions, judgements and prejudices continue to be bound. It is worth pointing out that these codes have not always been the same. It is quite different with the criteria that have configured them, given that judgement, whether conscious or unconscious, has not always been the same. What has not varied is that these normative ontologies automatically determine what bodies matter. They have done this, in spite of all variables, as if each time a kind of absolute truth, an unquestionable mandate, were made available. This is the decision that continues to hold sway over the decisions of a small few, those who have the power to decide who and what matters, and what canon is meant to dominate in certain groups and communities.

The relationship of the body with its surroundings, with itself and with other bodies, is a form of relational management that implies and is constituted on the basis of certain social norms. Assuming the differences between some and others could even come to be evident. Yet what happens when you no longer belong to something, yet will never belong to something else? What place do these bodies occupy? How might we defend the loss, or just as well the non-site?

Ruido and Vasallo introduce us into an intensely intimate dialogue, where the lack of a recognised territory of one's own, one that is given, could come to provoke loss and pain. Their gestures and words are melded together and find each other, knowing how to incarnate a new entity that is able to allow leeway. A space that assumes the performative displacement that is related to identity and which, therefore, is likewise terribly vulnerable and fragile. We refer, therefore, to encountered and confronted presences, thus constituting a new place, a place from where showing means to be almost without conditions.

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NOTES FOR THE SWAMP [CARTOGRAPHIES BASED ON MARÍA RUIDO]

Brigitte Vasallo

Avtar Brah says

The word diaspora refers to a "dispersion from" and thus expresses the notion of a centre, a locus, a "home" from which the dispersion takes place. What distinguishes a diaspora from a journey are the circumstances of the departure. Not just the who, but the when, how and why. A diaspora is a process of History.

Between 1950 and 1975, six million people in the Spanish State abandoned the country life in exchange for urban capitalist modernity, transformed into unskilled labourers, foreigners, illiterates, hicks. Their locus, their home, their origin lacks geographical continuity, a demonym: they don't come from a space but from a concept, from a way of life and a belief system that disappears with their exodus, with their migration.

The historical circumstances of this process are inscribed within the framework of a war waged against the peasantry by the oligarchies and major landowners empowered by the Francoist military regime. Following the fall of the European fascist project at the end of World War II, the regime was left isolated from the international community; but a turn in its economic policy became the cause and consequence of new alliances that favoured its unusual and unexpected survival. The result was the overwhelming influx of liberal capitalism and the extinction of communal forms of social organisation that failed to adapt or were incompatible with the newly imposed system.

Correction: The historical circumstances of this process are inscribed, therefore, within the framework of a war waged against the peasantry by the oligarchies and major landowners empowered by the Francoist military regime and with the support and consent of the international community.

Footnote

The relationship between the forms of intergenerational violence experienced in mutant families as well as the violence of expulsion, of the transformation of bodies into proletarian bodies and of the imposition of the National Catholic sex/gender system on peasant gender forms have not yet been studied.

Interlude

[*ElectroClass*] Workers have been co-opted. Their decline as a class was planned: consumers, homeowners. For the first time, their sons and daughters may not have to face the same backbreaking and destructive jobs they did. The working class becomes a place they want to leave. And why would they not want to leave it? Why should they have to try again, after swallowing so many defeats?

If I were free, I would write

Being almost a minor during the toughest decade of the Franco regime, Delfina Vasallo left Chandrexa de Queixa, 72 km from Xinzo de Limia, to go work as a servant in Paris: a language, a border and 1,410 km away from her village. I don't think she knew how to read or write, skills that she displayed years later in a hesitant, shaky way, and that she perhaps acquired in Paris.

She who eventually became my mother used to say: Madame Charmat taught me to cook and use cutlery. Frédéric Charmat, the boy who grew up under her care, was an artist. I have a painting of his in my house, the only material thing I keep of my mother's, apart from the features of my face, which (they say) are also hers. I was born when my mother thought she was returning to Spain but, due to a lack

of information, chose to settle in Catalonia. To a language, a non-administrative national border and 984 km from Chandrexa de Queixa. This miscalculation, this ignorance, condemned her to continue being an emigrant even after her return. To be a foreigner even when she had made the decision to stop being one.

All this banishment we carry with us is little more than that: a mistake, a miscalculation of just a few hundred kilometres.

In 1963, Dolores Ruido left Xinzo de Limia, 72 km from Chandrexa de Queixa, to go and wrap chocolates in a factory near Hamburg: a language, a border and 913 km from Paris. Her story is collected in the film *The Inner Memory*. María Ruido, her youngest daughter and director of the film, grew up in Xinzo under the care of her sisters and brothers.

When we met, Maria said to me: nós as duas somos o mesmo: ti creciches con nai mais sin terra, eu crecín con terra mais sin nai[1].

Identifying with the other through a certain longing is a form of home.

What we are not, says Marlene Wayar, defines us as much as what we are.

And Mayte Martín sings: the footprint's been erased from the sand, but the pain remains, and that can't be erased.

Country life is the phantasmagorical alterity of urban modernity, the reified and dehumanised otherness, the construct created to establish an opposite, without an identity beyond its function as an antithesis. Country folk are portrayed as sub-human, as humanity in the process of becoming humanised, without a valid political voice or recognised agency. Country life is portrayed as undesirable, and

1. "We're both the same: you grew up with a mother but without a homeland, I grew up with a homeland but without a mother."

there's only room for a narrative of self-hatred, of rejection and of being grateful for overcoming that state.

The forms of thought and transmission typical of this context are resignified and ridiculed: speech becomes an accent and orality becomes illiteracy. The only valid procedure is that of the bourgeoisie: gender norms, the refinement of the body, of gestures, the way of dressing, walking, aspirations, dreams, the way to fuck and with whom you should or shouldn't, words, the tone of words, topics that are valid and those that are taboo.

(The bourgeoisie, by definition, don't talk about money, sex or death)

The country, the rural, is a problem to be solved by the logics of urban modernity, enlightened, as a higher form of life. The poverty of that specific field is understood as "the poverty of the country", an essential quality of peasant life and not an accident related to industrial capitalism, the lack of access to mechanised means of production and the economic macro-processes that make autonomous forms of subsistence impossible, unless they are marginal.

Both spheres, urban modernity and country life, are constructed as exclusive. And that same construction process makes them *de facto* exclusive. All that which we call culture becomes urban heritage. And ends up in the hands of the dominant classes in and of the urban, who create their own norms of access and belonging. They control the means of production of culture. Workers, when they come to produce culture and not only to consume it, do so based on the logic of alienation.

Avtar Brah says

In diasporas, the circumstances of arrival are as important as those of departure. What I refer to—she says—as "diaspora space" encompasses the diasporic community and the non-displaced communities, the relationships that are established between them, as well as the relationships that are established between different diasporas.

Regardless of the place we ended up in, I call this expulsion from the countryside under the Franco regime the *Txarnego* diaspora. I call it this to give it a name that's grotesque, to give it a name that sounds bad, to give it a name that doesn't hide the violence, that doesn't bow its head, that embarrasses the master (for once): may his head hang in shame every time I pronounce it. What I call the *Txarnego* diaspora stems from a place that is ontological. Dispersion transforms us into a polycephalic monster with unequal heads: what we are and what we aren't in our arrivals to Catalonia, Madrid or the Basque Country, Germany, France or the United Kingdom, Argentina, Mexico or Brazil.

In the "diaspora space", to complete the map, the cartography—to continue with the nomenclature proposed by Brah—we must also include the populations that stayed in our places of origin, bearing the emptiness of our absence.

Interlude

[*The Inner Memory*] Today, when I got home, I felt like a foreigner; I'm already a foreigner, as a condition, as a debt.

Avtar Brah says

The concept of diaspora places the discourse of *home* and *dispersion* in creative tension, inscribes a desire for a home while criticising discourses that speak of fixed origins.

The diasporic fact tests the diaspora's journey and overwhelms the generation in transit. Us daughters of the diaspora continue to move towards the aspired being, towards the promise, towards the future that was imagined the moment we left our original world behind. If our community was broken up in order to progress, we must progress, because the sacrifice has been enormous. The board is laid out and all we have left is to play.

The imagined being is someone who has left their subordinate status behind.

What is the opposite of subordination?

What I refer to as the memory of hunger is a legacy as present and as tangible as the legacy of an illustrious surname. The shame attached to the memory of hunger is as consequential as the pride of the (speculative) accumulation of symbolic capital. We pay the debt we carry with social mobility, that's our condition: the obligation to continue the path that leads us away from being subordinate.

The ruling classes don't know they are dominant.

They know.

The ruling classes don't know that their dominant status operates in all gestures, in all relationships, at every moment. It's not due to a lack of information: they don't know because they simply don't care. They don't know because not knowing is part and parcel of domination. There's a neutrality similar to that of manhood and whiteness. There's a transparency, a silence. That which isn't named is that which exists the most, seeing as it doesn't even need to be named. To enter the space of the ruling classes, their physical space, the space they've created for themselves, for their own class validation and reproduction—the museum, the academy, the literary cocktail party or literary encounters in general—entering that space is an exercise in the dissimulation of oneself and the dissimulation of that space's violence. Every surname is an insult. The last names of the persecutors who greet you as if they were your equals knowing well that they aren't, and they brand the deep imbalance with fire, with that pantomime. Because I, to be an equal, can't be me. And they, to be equal to me, would have to cease to exist.

If I were free, I would write

There are squats that are full of daddy's girls and boys, who hate daddy and want to stand up to him. The bourgeoisie is so fucking self-referential and takes over all spaces. To access theirs you have to disguise yourself; to inhabit the resistance you have to pretend you don't recognise them

when they dress up as you. Bite the bullet. Hide what you know and what you see. Make yourself docile.

Smiling is a disturbing form of subalternity.

There are squats that are full of daddy's girls and boys, who hate daddy and can't stand spelling mistakes.

These squatters smell different. It's not a smell: it's an intuition, a sound, ways that endure, that are felt in the way of entering a room, of sitting down or getting up from a table, of taking the floor or letting it go, of looking or not looking.

The opposite of subordination is that smell. To abandon the subalternate condition is to notice that smell, despite the dissimulation. It's hating that smell. The ruling classes pretend in squats as I pretend in the museum, but their lie is applauded and mine is humiliating. It's the continuation of a historical humiliation.

That's the logic of subalternity, and its opposite is illegal.

I discovered that stench of authority in the gestures of the woman who owned the house where my mother cleaned, in the bank employee who got annoyed because my father didn't know how to read, in the teacher who was displeased by my accent my cadence my clothes my ways the tone of my voice or the volume of it. My roughness that still drags the earth under its nails. And that silence that descends when you walk into a work meeting where you're the only one who wasn't at the christening at the graduation party at that dinner that secret meeting between lefties who meet in secret places to talk about secret leftist things.

And on top of that, sporting those looks, that make-believe peasant body, those cheap clothes.

And that shitty last name.

But the silence betrays you. No matter how much you stop showering, you smell fucking clean.

Interlude

[*Amphibian Fictions*] I can't find a better image than that of an amphibian to define the adaptation of workers to

changes in the production system. Nothing's more similar to a woman who traverses through her long day between salaried work and invisible work than the different forms of amphibian breathing and, in the best of cases, cold blood.

Alba Solà Garcia says

We can understand the expansion of European capitalism within its own borders as a process of colonisation, tracing the history of domination and subalternisation of an otherness that includes the communal peasantry. Thus, European capitalism, from its beginnings to the present, has carried out the domination, annihilation and erasure of identities, cultures and *other* forms of life; that is, different forms of production and reproduction, to establish a single system of expropriation and thought.

If I were free, I would conclude

The social ways of the ruling classes are incompatible with life.

I'd feel sorry for you if you didn't disgust me so much.

I bought a flat to be free instead of lying.

I bought a flat far enough away and run down enough for it to be cheap. I bought it in cash, with money that I'd been stashing in a box for years.

I don't hide the money from the crooks, I hide it from the master. The crooks don't look at me: once they see me, they stop looking. But for the master, I'm anyone: and that's why.

For years I've been skimping on social life, on trips, on holidays, refusing to work jobs that disgust me, refusing to buy new clothes beyond what's strictly necessary for carrying out the necessary dissimulation, eating things I like and that do me good, by going to therapy so as not to take medication. This is how I filled the box: by emptying.

The opposite of capitalism isn't anti-capitalism, it's having a roof over your head.

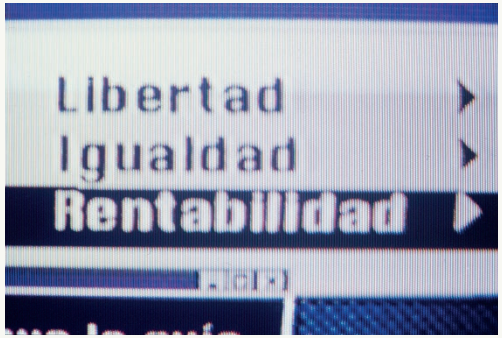
My biggest fear is having to sleep on the street.

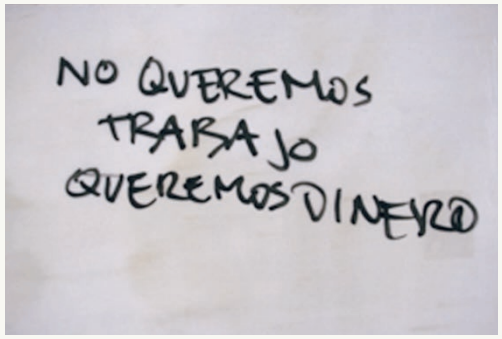
My biggest fear is that my son ends up homeless because of a mistake I made. Due to a miscalculation of mine. For having bitten the hand that feeds me. For having spit in the master's face by writing as if I were free. I'm not prettier when I'm quiet, but I sure am safer.

You'd disgust me if I wasn't so afraid of you.

Notes for the Swamp [Cartographies based on María Ruido]. With fragments of *Cartographies of Diaspora* by Avtar Brah, ElectroClass by María Ruido, *Travesti. Una teoría lo suficientemente buena* [Cross-dressing: A Good Enough Theory] by Marlene Wayar, "Por la mar chica del puerto" [By the Small Sea of the Port] by Mayte Martín, *La memoria interior* [The Inner Memory] by María Ruido, *Ficciones anfibias* [Amphibious Fictions] by María Ruido, "Campesinos, punks y charnegos" [Peasants, Punks and Charnegos] by Alba Solà Garcia.

María Ruido, *Las reglas del juego* [The Rules of the Game], 2022 (video stills). HD video. Single-channel, colour, stereo sound. Duration: 40' 44". Courtesy of the artist





María Ruido, *Tiempo real* [Real time], 2003 (video stills). HD video. Single-channel, colour, stereo sound. Duration: 43'. Courtesy of the artist and Galería Rosa Santos

María Ruido, *Ficciones anfibias* [Amphibious Fictions], 2005 (video stills). HD video. Single-channel, colour, stereo sound. Duration: 33'. Courtesy of the artist and Galería Rosa Santos

María Ruido, *ElectroClass*, 2011 (video stills). HD video. Single-channel, colour, stereo sound. Duration: 53'. Courtesy of the artist and Galería Rosa Santos

WORKING DEAD: A SOCIAL RESEARCH EXPERIENCE IN THE MUSEUM

Valentín Roma

In early 2017, coinciding with the new artistic direction at La Virreina Centre de la Imatge, an entirely novel area of activity was begun at the institution. This involved situating social research at the heart of its activity, while granting it discursive and budgetary autonomy in relation to the centre's exposition projects and public programming.

A two-pronged notion fed this idea: on the one hand, it involved constructing a broad area of dialogue in the spectrum of Barcelona, with non-codified introductory practices; on the other hand, it focused on testing long-term forms of overflow, implying the introduction of other temporalities within an apparatus—namely the museum—which has been historically programmed for the occasion and for gestures of higher-profile consequence.

Meanwhile, another of the fundamental parameters in play in that period was that these research projects would be done by teams with artists, activists and thinkers carrying out significant roles. It was taken as a given that we find ourselves immersed in an excess of sectorial theorisation, amidst yet another wave of institutional critique which has now become excessively autistic, substituting reflection on the roles of the museum in the public sphere for other disquietudes regarding its nomenclatures, administrative worries and deeply-rooted systems of acclaim and occultation.

In this context, María Ruido, Marta Echaves and Antonio Gómez Villar were proposed to come up with a plan "to reconsider ever-worsening employment conditions, and to analyse how the division of labour not only makes up our lives, but is intimately tied in to forms of

governance that radically influence our existences," as they themselves expressed.

The result is *Working Dead: Post-Work Scenarios*, a research project that lasted for two years and had four public episodes. The first was on 28 September 2017, when the project was presented, together with the film *La mano invisible* [The Invisible Hand] (2016) by David Macián, based on the novel of the same name by Isaac Rosa, with the presence of the filmmaker and the writer.[1] The second episode featured two seminars, on 21 and 22 March 2018, dedicated to the subject of *Trabajo más allá del empleo: producción y reproducción en la era del postrabajo*[2] [Work Beyond Employment: Production and Reproduction in the Era of Post-Work], with Matxalen Legarreta and Marta Malo de Molina,[3] along with Las Kellys, Tonina Matamalas Ensenyat, Carme Gomila Seguí and the Agrupación Feminista de Trabajadoras del Sexo (AFEMTRAS).[4] Finally, on 24 October 2019, there was the presentation of the book *Working Dead: Post-Work Scenarios*, a volume which prolonged the collection published through La Virreina for its research or social imagination production platforms.[5] Rather than

1. See <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/lavirreina/en/research/working-dead-post-work-scenarios/151> and <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/lavirreina/en/resources/working-dead-post-work-scenarios/173>
2. See <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/lavirreina/en/activities/work-without-employment-production-and-reproduction-post-work-era/266>
3. See <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/lavirreina/en/resources/work-without-employment-production-and-reproduction-post-work-era-1/268>
4. See <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/lavirreina/en/resources/work-without-employment-production-and-reproduction-post-work-era-2/277>
5. See <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/lavirreina/en/publications/arxivar-archive/172> and <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/lavirreina/en/publications/espectres-ghosts/204>

being an anthology of the materials developed until that point in time, it was a shared essay, with unpublished texts, interviews and conversations.[6]

What sort of summary might be made regarding this experience from an institutional perspective? First of all, it should be emphasised that it continues to be necessary to rethink the perimeters of the debate on working conditions, beyond the axes imposed by orthodox political thought, set up in terms of the dilemmas of right and left, neoliberalism or syndicalism. It is also worth referring to regulatory systems put into place by sectors like that of art, which in certain cases adopt the appearance of productive demands instead of being truly dissident ideologies in the face of labour.

In *Working Dead* and, I believe, in María Ruido's own artistic practice, as well as in the philosophical thought of Antonio Gómez Villar and the curatorial and investigative task of Marta Echaves, reflection on class does not turn into an extra ingredient or a political dressing, constituting rather a critical feature articulating each of their respective paths.

For this reason, because the working class has broadened the foundation that previously articulated it, now being obliged (and especially certain generations) to face the conflict of the aspirational, that is, of declassing, and with it a process whereby other subjectivities are constituted, along with other interrogatives and forms of connection with memory and proletarian knowledge; and because nowadays we must somatise isolation, unite our vulnerabilities and find systems of collectivisation for our strength of work, the longstanding formula of art=life has clearly made manifest its roots in bourgeois repentance, while the new

6. See <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/lavirreina/en/activities/presentation-book-working-dead/405>; <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/lavirreina/en/resources/presentation-book-working-dead-escenarios-del-postrabajo/411> and <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/lavirreina/en/publicacions/working-dead/409>

sentimental middle classes—as the new governors, consumers and museum narrators—appeal to a certain emotionality with its own political antagonisms, delighting in the arrival of the revolution while at the same time being ideologically ashamed of it.

Proletarian thought and history still constitute a anomaly in museography. Institutional reinvention supplanted a genuine plan for transformation. Where urgent projects were required, instead there appeared sophisticated grammatical analyses which were only capable of detecting system errors. An intense task of recodification does not always imply a corresponding confrontational verve.

The question, therefore, is not whether the subaltern has a place in the Museum institution; it is whether the Museum apparatus can audit itself, converting itself into a parliament of the sensitive, or whether it is set up to engage its own transparency. The question, as the *Working Dead* project exemplified, is to what point "the cultural factory" replicates, in the model of contemporary capitalism, each and every one of the alienations, identification processes, discrepancy methods and hierarchies of other factories where those bringing news of ideological antiquity were employed, paraphrasing that memorable film by Alexander Kluge[7] on the necessarily beautiful and involuntarily unfruitful attempt by Sergei Eisenstein to express, in a film, Karl Marx's *Das Kapital*.

7. Kluge, Alexander. *Nachrichten aus der ideologischen Antike - Marx/Eisenstein/Das Kapital*, 2008.

THE INNER MEMORY[1]

For a (thorough) look at the representation of
(self)foreignness, the images of work and of absence

María Ruido

Mephistopheles: Cease with your brooding grief to play
That, like a vulture, eats your life away.
I'm not one of the Great;
Still, if through life you'll go with me,
In that case I'll agree
With pleasure to accommodate
You, on the spot belong to you.
I'll be your comrade true
And if to your liking I behave,
I'll be your servant, be your slave!
Faust: And what in turn am I to do for you?
Am I to write with graver, chisel or pen?
The spoken word dies forthwith in the quill;
Leather and wax remain our masters still.
Mephistopheles: With one wee drop of blood you sign your name.
Oh, trust me who for many a thousand year
Have chewed this crust of sour taste.
I'd think you'd let yourself be taught.
Associate you with a poet; then, in thought,
You leave the gentleman full sweep,
Upon your honoured head to heap
Each good and noble quality.
Life is short and art is long.
Faust: Life's wildering whirl be mine, its painfulest enjoyment,
Enamoured hate, and quickening annoyment.
My bosom, of all thirst for knowledge cured,
Shall close itself henceforth against no woe.

—

1. Original script of María Ruido's film *La memoria interior* [The Inner Memory], 2002.

Memory and oblivion are mutually bound, both are necessary for the complete occupation of time.

Memory's duty is the duty of the descendants, and has two sides:

remembrance and vigilance, to find in the everyday the shape of the unnameable.

But the official memory needs monuments: it aestheticises death and horror.

(Voice)

Memory is imperfect, it is selective, forgetful.

Only our bodies, registered passers-by, keep the sour taste of the price of the justest dreams.

The importance of the numbers of the Spanish emigration to some European countries such as Germany, France or Switzerland between 1959 and 1973 is well known. The conjunction of a surplus work force in Spain (and in other countries in the South) and a strong demand for unqualified workers in these countries, immersed in a period of economic growth, together with the abandonment of a restrictive migratory politics and of the so-called autarchy, resulted in an abundant flow of work force destined to Europe.

I have now made this trip to become the subjects of history, against its history of the subjects, to arrest our look at the unpunished and intransitive look of the statues.

Between 1963 and 1966 my mother packed chocolate in a factory near Hamburg, however, she never knew the Baltic.

I was born in between continental trips, and learned fast: amnesia of the past, amnesia of the future. Amnesia forced on those past decades.

Between 1970 and 1987 my mother and my father worked for the Deutsche Carbone in Kalbach (Frankfurt) manufacturing pressed coal pieces.

The politics of memory, the political memory: I have made this trip, an experience of memory, to meet the

memory of my experience, the anaesthetised memories of those who have forgotten so that I can remember. For an inner look, prior to its words cast on stone.

(Interview with Dolores Ruido and Manuel Lopez)

—And that, what year was that, mom?
—Ah, I don't remember any longer what year that was. It's been a long time.
—January the eight of 63.
—And you were there until when?
—I was there three years. I came back home because my father died, and spent here three months. And afterwards Fina came back with me.
—At the end, how long were you there for? You (mom) much longer.
—Between the other factory and this one, I had twenty-one years and a half, but they took off the three months that I spent here, which I didn't pay for and which I should have paid for.
—And you, dad, eighteen, more or less?
—I was there from May 70 until 86, November or December, when we came back.
—And then you left again.

—So then it was too much family, and because of it Miss Pilar (the village teacher) told you to leave, isn't it? But it must have been hard there, to endure all year long until vacation, missing the land and the children. Maria, she was so little.
—Yes.
—To be there, so far away from the children.
—Yes.
—And didn't you ever think of taking us with you over there?
—No. I thought of taking you there. You alone. But it was too much trouble, because one had to, not being able to speak, that makes everything harder.

—But, over there, most of the people who went took their children with them.
—Yes, many people took the children there, the family, but.
—It was just the Andalusians, who took their families.
—Only the Andalusians?
—The Andalusians, those from Madrid, well… as they could.
—Were they grown already?
—They had nothing, so they took them, because they had nothing here in Spain. Not a house, nothing. But we always wanted to come back to our land, so we saved for it.

—Ah, world, world, how you turn and turn.
—You are the ones who turned and turned. Because it was very hard to leave, but thanks for that, these little ones were able to study.
—That's why we were there. Our interest in it. They were going upwards, and we took away (money) to send over to them, sometimes we sent everything we earned to them, and sometimes we shared it with them.
—There were times when we sent this one up to 700 marks to Coruña, where were you, in Santiago?
—In Santiago.

—But did you come back with the retirement or before getting the retirement?
—We received from over there a rent of two hundred thousand or more pesetas every month.
—At the beginning, of course.
—That was a lot of money.
—But then we got regular retirement.
—Then it was less, wasn't it?
—Regular retirement came, and they would send us what was ours, but during that time the money came in very well. And the factory gives us more than ten thousand pesetas a month (each). She was there for twenty years, and I was there eighteen, and I get more than her.

—Well, if that had been nowadays, it would have been better not to leave, wouldn't it?
—Oh, well, if we weren't getting paid our retirement, it is the same as before, because now we get more than two hundred thousand pesetas every month, but one year you sell the potatoes a little better, and another- last year Sindo sold 34 or 35.000 kilos at 3pts. What is that!

—

Workers are deviated from their revolutionary objective. Moreover, their decline as a class has been designed: consumers of products, home owners. For the first time, they have the possibility for their sons and daughters not to face the same tiring and destructive jobs that they faced. Class becomes a place one wants to abandon. And for what reason wouldn't they want to abandon it? Why should they try again, after having swallowed so many defeats?

(Interview with Cristina Scheller,
Union Secretary of Carbone A.G.)

—How many workers are at the moment in Carbone?
—In total, factory and office workers together, three hundred and twenty-seven.
—How many of them are foreigners?
—There are around one hundred and forty foreigners.
—And, what we were talking about before, right now there is no more hiring.
—No one is admitted. They have enough people and they don't take anyone in, not even Germans, or foreigners, absolutely no one. They only admit assistants from other companies that hire people temporarily, at vacations.
—What does your work in the factory, as the union representative, consist of? Do you act as an intermediary between the workers and the firm?

—All the problems we have are put on the table, and she resolves them as best she can.
—But is there only one union in the factory?
—She is the union representative, the secretary.
—Of the company's union, but, aren't there any other unions?
—Here, in the factory, there aren't. But in Frankfurt, at headquarters, when there is a reunion, a person from the Metal Union comes to listen to our problems, and if anything can be done, to solve them.
—This firm belongs to the Metal Union?
—Yes. It is part of the Metal Industry.

(Voice)

Even though I dreaded parents' reunions at school, even though later I would resent your internalisation of the firm's paternalism and of the life at the barracks, I have always known who I was, where I came from. It is necessary to have an attentive self-control, to avoid being the object of external control, of pity or charity: get on, don't fall, go by yourself to the doctor, don't get any debts, don't ask for the impossible. And all that fear, and that rage that you have gone through. All that fear still lives inside me. Today, from my work, I think of how to make your work visible: the production of history, the history of production.

How to imagine the factory today? How to represent the black dust, and the quiet, because fatigued, dressing rooms, and the scarcity of words during twenty years?

How to make you understand that we work already when we don't work, that we honour your memory when we withstand precariously? How to make you comprehend that work hasn't made us free? And all the contradictions, and all the difficulties of being the smallest, of being a woman and of not being up to the expectations.

All your efforts were directed at changing our future, and the changed future rose between us like an

unsurpassable distance: mother, I will carry with pride the legacy of your little treasures to tell you that which I have never told you.

—

It is banal to say that memory is a lier, it is more interesting to see in this lie a form of natural protection that can be governed and modelled. Tales of the other, of the stranger (foreigner) in me.

(Interview with Ramona Costa, Eugenio Costa, Vito Raimondi and Benito Costa)

—Foreigners. You get here, foreigner. The Germans have come, and that hurts, because they treat you like…
—Well, they treat you normally.
—Yes, but it hurts, because they say that word. They don't say family, neighbours. Here come the Germans.
—There is the German.
—And that hurts, because inside, you feel Spanish, normal, Spanish. And then they come and say that. Foreigner there, foreigner here. You don't have a choice. Like a gypsy. You don't have anything positive.
—Foreigner here, foreigner there. Because there isn't anything else.

—At the beginning there were more of us Italians, Spaniards, Greek, and also a few Portuguese.
—And Yugoslavs… they don't make any trouble. We were fine in the barracks…
—Those were wonderful times.
—Yes, it was good, very good.
—Because you were better friends with the workers here in the factory, because you lived with them, it was all more together.
—More family-like.
—You had problems and you talked, and you straightened

it out, but today, that was cut off, it is less family-like, each is independent.
—Now, each one works for herself.
—Independent, and it is not like before anymore, do you understand? Before, when you were in the barracks, you knew Italians, Spaniards, Greeks, there weren't any Turks.
—One.
—Only one.
—Yes, a woman.
—And very few Portuguese. Back then there were three or four countries, but we understood each other well.
—But all of them European.
—What do I know, you shared what you had like siblings.
—Well, because we lived together, like a family.
—Together.

—Here, if you don't work, no one gives it to you, do you understand?
—Well, I think that the German state, I speak better Italian, to express myself better, I think that it does a lot for the foreigner, but right now, if there aren't two of you working here in Germany, it is very hard to live. Because, before, thirty years ago, you could live with only one person working, one lived better, but now, there has to be two people working, to pay the house, life here.
—It is expensive.
—It is very expensive… one can live here alone… only the person who comes, I don't know, from Albania, or Russia, where they don't have anything, just like the Albanians go now to Italy. One does not live like one used to.

—My thought was, we had bought the house… But the house is over there. And we are here, when we go on vacation, we go for one week.
—To clean up.
—…no, to the sea.
—Oh, the sea.

—then, another week and somewhere else. (The house) is just for sleeping a couple of days, it is a bit sad, and you think, you think a lot. But, what can you do?

When I tell my son about leaving for Italy, him, for vacation, but not for staying.

—Public, yes, but we are very happy. They treat them well. Besides, over here, every two or three months, there is a parents' meeting with the teachers. Because, over here, there is one teacher for math, it is not the same one for all. There is one teacher for biology, one for chemistry, each teacher…

—Over here in Germany families move around, do you understand? And, in Spain, families, when certain occasions arrive, get together.
—Yes.
—Same in Italy.
—Because I remember when we were children, before coming to Germany, we would all get together at my grandmother's house. My grandmother's was the main house, and we would all be there: uncles and aunts, cousins, nieces… the whole family. We could even be 25 or 30. We would set up the tables and chairs in the farmyard, and there it would just be singing and drinking. And the children would be playing. I remember that, I was just a kid.

It is very different. Look, one thing is to tell you about it, and another thing is to live it, do you understand? And it is not just one year, it is many years. And you accept this over here, and you have to forget about over there little by little, and I would want my son to remember, about over there, what was left behind, do you understand? But it is difficult, because my family is over here, and I don't go over Christmas to Spain, for him to get to know it, because I would break my family's friendship, do you understand? Because over here, we all get together, either at my mother's house or at my house. It is three of us siblings and we are all there, as late as

we want. And for New Year's Eve we go to the dance, and we enjoy it over there.
—Until five in the morning.

(Voice)

The official planning of a politics of migration was the provisional. A strategy that, apart from articulating a mechanism of temporal adjustment to the state work market, it favoured the acquisition of foreign currency with which to finance imports.

Spanish emigration to Europe (1959-1973). Admitted final numbers: two million workers.

Dear children, double point, just two words to tell you that we are well. The letters with photographs came and went: my first bicycle, the birthdays, the first family vacations, the knitted dresses that you sent me.

I didn't understand then why you insisted on writing in Castilian. The break-up grew with the distance, feeding on our efforts.

We changed in your absence, to the point of becoming complete strangers, but the fiction of progress was almost perfect. We were strangers for you who lived among strangers, those you despised in order to save your little distance of less different among the different.

Today, when I get home, I feel a stranger; I am already a stranger, as a condition, as a debt.

How to retrieve all that absence of the time of the photographs? How to finish with the silence and the TV on at all times so as not to ask? I have lost your words in acquiring other words: I remember your sudden illnesses right before every trip, the little traps and humiliations of the borders, and I start to walk among emigrants who still are.

To receive, not to look for. To wait until the instants come to me, to speak from my body, from the bodies of others, the only one of possible spaces in which to reconstruct the history learned at university, in the monuments.

This is a trip filled with faith, with analogies and chance: more than twenty years ago I was here, and now I return to speak about it, to take those images which fed this memory of oblivion: the factory is smaller than in my memories, the Bergstrasse busier, the Central Station.

I have made this trip because I have the duty of memory, and the necessity to tell our history which is also the History.

Texts[2]

Goethe, Johann W.: *Faust* (1808)
Auge, Marc: *The shapes of oblivion* (1998)
Walkerdine, Valerie: "Subject exchanged without prior notice: psychology, postmodernity and the popular" (1996)
Marker, Chris: *Inmemory* (1998)
Kristeva, Julia: *Strangers to Ourselves* (1988)

Images

S. Eisenstein: *October* (1927)
NO-DO (Spanish Documentary News) (1964)

Music

W.A. Mozart: *The magic flute* (1791)
Ignorant, Anton: *The right to copy* (1999)
Valderrama, Juanito: *El emigrante* (1959)

2. Texts, audiovisuals sources and music cited according to the author's original manuscript.

María Ruido, *La memoria interior* [The Inner Memory], 2002 (video stills). Hi8 video. Single-channel, colour, stereo sound. Duration: 33'. Courtesy of the artist and Galería Rosa Santos

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