

«A ROSE IS A ROSE» /  
«ONE ROSE AND ANOTHER, KIND OF ROSE»

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**Abstract**

A tale of two women, a chair and a broom. On everyday, involuntary, and socially-determined bodily gestures. On social and gender dissymmetry and inequalities. On cognitive and physical labour. On regulated and unregulated time. On written and oral language. On still and moving bodies. On certain gestures made with the hands and their evolution over time. On one woman and another woman. On several women. On things that do not get to be seen and are lost in the mist.

**Keywords**

women and writing; art criticism; fiction and non-fiction; cognitive labour; reproductive labour; precarious labour; gender; body; autoethnography; art and life.

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I haven't done very much writing. When I have written it's always because I was commissioned to. For a time —which seemed endless— it was easy to find places to publish art criticism. That time came to an end, and then, as nobody asked me to write any more, I stopped.

While I was writing regularly, I occupied a newspaper column for two years. I could write anything and nothing, about what I wanted, however I wanted. There were only two limitations: the length and deadline, expressed in figures: 2,400 characters with spaces, 15 days between one published column and the next.

**Prelude to a scene**

I recently read a compilation of articles by Santiago Alba Rico in a book. The length of the texts runs between 4,000 and 7,000 characters, and they were originally published in newspapers from 2008 to 2010. I can imagine the doubly urgent conditions of their publication: the urgency of the deadline, and the urge to respond to the moment they were written in. As I

read, it becomes clear that there was a will to form behind these articles, a will to occupy and produce a space. I enjoy reading them.

But there is one of these essays by Alba Rico that I don't like. When I first read "Elogio del aburrimiento" (Elegy to Boredom) I'm immediately captivated by the weave of the argument and what the writer puts forward. The argument is woven around Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and Rosa Chacel. Alba Rico suggests that there are moments of concentration accompanying the work of the writer which have traditionally been perceived as sterile or idle time. The perception becomes more notable when the person doing the writing is a woman.

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz interests me. So do the conditions in which women have written. I hardly know anything about Rosa Chacel. The image of a placid elderly woman with glasses and white hair comes to mind. She could be someone's grandmother. Either of mine, for instance. She doesn't make me think of other women in exile whose physical features were more singular —María Zambrano, for instance, who always smoked cigarettes with mouthpieces. Here is a woman who shows independence of thought and who thinks, her elegant, superfluous turn of the wrist seems to indicate.

### Sudden stage entrance

Why do I go back to "Elogio del aburrimiento" if I dislike it so much? Apart from the hurriedness of its sudden ending, what brings me back to it is this paragraph.

Rosa Chacel, one of the greatest Spanish novelists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, said that when she was writing her novel *La sinrazón* in the 'fifties, she would spend hours reclining on her living room sofa. And while the cleaning woman swept, she would glance at her compassionately, as if to scold her: "If you did something you wouldn't get so bored". But Rosa Chacel was doing something: she was thinking, and even shifting her position might pull her out of her introspection or bring her painfully back up to the surface.<sup>1</sup>

### Portrait of a reclining woman (i)

Two women make their appearance in this scene referred to by an elderly woman with glasses and white hair who could be my grandmother — although we might say that there are more than two in the room: (1) the woman the writer feels she is, a woman who reclines on a sofa and thinks about a novel; (2) the woman the writer sees while she is on her sofa thinking —a woman sweeping; (3) the woman the writer thinks is seen by the woman who sweeps —a woman reclining on a sofa.

There are other women in the scene: (4) the woman who the woman sweeping feels she is; (5) the woman who this woman sees reclining on a sofa; (6) the woman who sees the scene through Alba Rico's text... We could prolong the game of mirrors. But the game is of no use. Because the story is told by Chacel, a woman who thinks while another woman sweeps.

### Portrait of a reclining woman (ii)

The elements that make up the scene —two women, a sofa and a broom— portray a social reality which, like all social realities, is asymmetrical. What is contained by this reality could be summed up like this: there is a woman reclining on a sofa *because* there is another woman sweeping.

I search the web for information on Chacel. Born in 1898, she went into exile when the Spanish Civil War broke out. She lived in Brazil and Argentina in the fifties under financial hardship. Those years coincide with the years of writing *La Sinrazón*, which she finished in 1958 and published in 1960. The sofa scene is from those years.

This information nuances the statement "There is a woman reclining on a sofa *because* there is another woman sweeping." Chacel appears in the scene as what she originally was: a bourgeois woman. Yet rather than having tea with her friends, this bourgeois woman spent her time thinking and writing books. However much we peel away the nuances, it does not quite erase what presents itself as a crude recognition of an alterity: someone thinks while someone sweeps.

### Portrait of a reclining woman (iii)

I ask myself what would happen were the genders of the characters to change. If the person reclining were a man. In that case, we would come up against gender, not class inequality. A structural inequality. And if it were the man who swept and the woman who reclined on the sofa, we would be confronting an inversion of reality as unquestionable as the sun rising on the east and setting on the west.

But what would happen if the scene was enacted by two men? One man reclining on the sofa while another swept. We would no longer be watching a scene of submission between a woman and a man or a bourgeois woman and a maid in a home of a century gone by. As in the previous variations, the scene is charged with violence, although here it seems more crude. Why do we seem to now be witnessing a reality that escapes a given cultural

context? In actual fact, when we bring in two male figures the scene attains mythical proportions. The figure on the sofa and the one with the broom appear as archetypes, symbols of the principle governing human relations: to dominate or be dominated.

Or at least this is how it appears to me. The passage of the Master and Slave in *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) is the reason why I recognise the universal relationship of domination in the two male figures. According to Hegel, the dialectical relationship between master and slave marked the beginning of history. Desire —the master's desire unleashed and the slave's repressed— drives the relationship. The slave's work allows the master to attain the object of his desire.

A bourgeois woman reclines on a sofa while her maid sweeps. There is work in the scene. Work, in the sweeping of a woman who cleans for another who thinks —and it remains to be seen whether the thinking woman is working. There is no desire, though. What mediates between the two figures is mutual indifference.

### Portrait of a reclining woman (iv)

Perhaps to imagine the two women in the scene as Hegelian archetypes might help me through the mental block that seizes me whenever I read the paragraph from "Elogio del aburrimiento". I am bewildered by the crudeness in the description of what is happening. Although actually very little is happening. What confuses me is the indifference with which the two figures display their mutual recognition of their differences.

I try to see them as archetypes. I strip the reclining and the sweeping woman of their attributes (name, age, marital status, language, personal history) and retain only two. One for each woman; the sofa and the broom are the attributes in this story.

Thinking and sweeping are silent tasks, analysed in *The Human Condition* by Hannah Arendt. Another woman from the mid-twentieth century who was portrayed in photos holding a cigarette with a gracious, coquettish turn of the wrist, a gesture which says, "I am a woman who shows independence of thought. I am a woman who thinks."

As I said, I haven't found any photographs showing Chacel holding a cigarette. Only the placid, jovial grandmother. A handless grandmother. For some reason I'm not aware of, no hands appear in the framing. Perhaps she's holding them in her lap. But Chacel and Arendt do coincide in one thing: the novelist finished *La Sinrazón* (Unreason) in 1958, both women

were mature women living far from their homelands. Chacel was sixty, Arendt fifty-one.

(A bright idea occurs to me suddenly, a whim. An impossible book. It has a double title and was written by four hands, in different places at the same time, midway through the modern century: *The Human Condition. Unreason.*)

I know nothing about *La Sinrazón*, though I read that Chacel considered it her obra magna.<sup>2</sup> I imagine it a difficult novel. In its beginnings, Chacel, who was a disciple of José Ortega y Gasset, followed the philosopher's idea of the "dehumanisation of art". In Ortega y Gasset's 1925 essay by the same title, he speaks of the new dehumanised art, which aimed to "eliminate 'human, too human' ingredients and retain only purely artistic material".<sup>3</sup> I read all of this with an image in the background of a placid, jovial grandmother, resting her hands in her lap, who could have been my own grandmother.

Three decades after Ortega y Gasset's essay was published, Arendt offers a set of tools for interpreting the history of the first half of her century and understanding how to act collectively in the second half. *The Human Condition* distinguishes three types of *vita activa* or activity: 1. labour, the necessary activities for sustaining everyday life; 2. work, the production of objects; 3. action, that which makes us human and allows us to develop our capacity to be free.

Labour, work and action. The choice of order implicitly states a hierarchy of values. Labour, the set of activities necessary to maintain life, would be at the base of the pyramid that represents the activities that make people human.

Men can very well live without labouring, they can force others to labour for them, and they can very well decide merely to use and enjoy the world of things without themselves adding a single useful object to it; the life of an exploiter or slaveholder and the life of a parasite may be unjust, but they certainly are human.<sup>4</sup>

While the woman with the broom was sweeping Chacel's home, she was labouring. She was a *homo laborans* at the service of someone who had no need to labour. But in addition to freeing herself from labour, what was it that Chacel was doing as she lay back on her sofa? What category would her thinking activity enter into? And what value does an invisible, silent activity have, which is nothing as it has not yet been given form?

Arendt, as a thinker herself, deals with thought in her chapter on work in *The Human Condition*. As neither work nor action, "the thought process by

itself does not produce or fabricate tangible things, such as books, paintings, sculptures, or compositions". Nevertheless, thinking up a work of art is a type of "thought which precedes action"<sup>5</sup>. Whatever the case, the thinking process that produces works of art "begins to assert itself as a source of inspiration only where he overreaches himself, as it were, and begins to produce useless things."<sup>6</sup>

While Rosa Chacel reclined on her sofa she was thinking. Her invisible, silent action would take time to acquire a form. A useless form, belonging to the group of "objects which are unrelated to material or intellectual wants, to man's physical needs no less than to his thirst for knowledge."<sup>7</sup>

### Portrait of a reclining woman (v)

Recurring to archetypes has helped me expose the differences between the woman who thinks and the one who sweeps. But it hasn't helped me to shed any light on the enigma of Rosa Chacel, the sphinx-woman reclining on the sofa. Once again I turn to internet. I see there that in 1915, at the age of seventeen, she enrolled at the San Fernando Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Madrid.

Before becoming a writer Chacel had wanted to be an artist, to work matter —to touch it with her hands, the hands that have been snatched away in the photos. I won't continue along this path of Rosa Chacel's hands or her need to touch. I haven't been offered a glimpse of them.

I think of all the works Fine Art students look at during their studies, and how the students learn through form. Forms realised as images, like the scene of the woman reclining and the woman sweeping. Chacel knew perfectly well that her story would bring about a stream of associations with other images in her reader.

*Odalisque with Slave* (1842), for instance —a painting by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres. In the foreground is a naked woman, by whose side we see a clothed slave playing an instrument. The composition could recall the Hegelian passage of the master and slave. In the background is a standing figure sunken in shadow which undoes the illusion. This man is the guardian of the harem.

As I look at the painting a sentence by Chacel in another of Alba Rico's articles comes to mind. The sentence relates to the two figures in the foreground, who, although they are placed in an unequal relationship, share the same domestic reality, the same bind: "The natural place of woman is the harem."<sup>8</sup>

Again, I feel the brutality of the elderly, white-haired woman as a sharp, fistlike blow. "Natural place" sounds to me like "glass ceiling"; but I don't believe the phrase conceals a resigned complaint, but rather a stark recognition and a dispassionate acceptance.

### Portrait of a reclining woman (vi)

Chacel abandoned her art studies in 1918 to dedicate herself to writing, but art continued to be closely present in her life. Her husband, Timoteo Pérez Rubio, was a painter. I find a portrait of the writer by him from 1925. Here, Chacel is no longer the placid, white haired granny. She's a young, dark haired woman. She reclines, but not as I had imagined. She is not limp like the indolent odalisque on a divan. Sitting on an armchair, she wears a closely-fitting black dress and a blue cardigan. Her upright figure draws a graceful vertical curve. Her legs are folded under her on the chair, and she seems to be caught up in her own thoughts, indifferent to what is going on outside her.

I find these words in an obituary to Chacel on her death in 1994. Their writer might easily have had the 1925 portrait in front of him.

"Rosa Chacel was always too busy with her own world to occupy herself with others."<sup>9</sup>

### Portrait of a reclining woman (viii)

I have left out one singular detail in Pérez Rubio's portrait. In the painting one of the writer's hands —finally! — makes an appearance. Given that the reader of this text cannot see the painting, I must explain how the strange phenomenon of one of Chacel's hands, so hidden in other portraits, emerges in this scene. The writer is sitting in an armchair, wearing black and blue, with her arms folded. Her right hand is hidden in the fold of her left arm. Her left arm is raised vertically in front of her chest. Crowning the blue vertical curve appears her left hand. Her hand is turned inward, unlike the thinking smokers', but just as coquettish and whimsical as theirs; and it leans towards her black chest like a white wing.

Some time later I come across another photo of Chacel with her glasses and white hair. In it is the same hand, with carefully painted nails, held in the same gesture. This time, the hand on her chest is playing with a pearl necklace. I cannot help asking what this turn of the wrist means, opposite but so similar to the smoking thinkers: it signals gender, class, epoch, etc.

Beyond its particular cultural context, the gesture also says something else. A woman who turns her wrist stops time, and carries on thinking.

### Portrait of a reclining woman (viii)

I focus on another writer from the twentieth century, Virginia Woolf. There is a lot in common between her and the writer of *La Sinrazón*, although this might be just a hunch, as I know little about Rosa Chacel.

Reading Virginia Woolf it becomes patent that she wrote from the consciousness of being a body in a conflicting relationship with itself. So that "telling the truth about my own experiences as a body" would become an imperative task, one which "I doubt that any woman has solved yet."<sup>10</sup>

Woolf's conflicted body is situated in a particular place. Speaking from a certain place implies the impossibility of occupying and inhabiting others, as Woolf noted in "Memories of a Working Women's Guild", the introduction to *Life as We Have Known It by Co-Operative Working Women*. The book, which was published in 1931, is a collection of autobiographical stories by women associated with the cooperative. In her essay, Woolf writes of the lives of those women. Or more correctly, of the impossibility of writing of them, because the women's experiences are other: "One could not be Mrs Giles of Durham because one's body had never stood at the wash-tub, one's hands had never wrung and scrubbed."<sup>11</sup>

Virginia Woolf's body has experienced other things, related to objects other than Mrs. Giles' washtub. "One sat in an armchair or read a book. One saw landscapes and seascapes, perhaps Greece or Italy." Again the armchair, a protagonist in this text, a sign of class, shows the place it occupies and where the writer is speaking from. And to speak of other lives where "there were no armchairs, or electric light, or hot water"<sup>12</sup> while one is comfortably seated in an armchair, "is always physically uncomfortable," because "however much we had sympathized, our sympathy was largely fictitious. It was aesthetic sympathy, the sympathy of the eye and of the imagination, not of the heart and of the nerves."<sup>13</sup>

I search for portraits of Woolf. I find one of her holding her hand in what was apparently a habitual gesture: with a cigarette between her fingers, resting her hand on her cheek, with the tips of her fingers gently touching her forehead. And there is her armchair, too. It seems to have been an ochre, winged armchair, as in the faceless portraits painted by her sister Vanessa Bell in 1912, or low with patterned upholstery, as in the photographs which show her holding a book. The armchair belongs to



Woolf's room of one's own. It is evidence of having the time to turn one's hand in a superfluous, useless gesture; time to think and write.

### Portrait of a reclining woman (ix)

Woolf continues to speak, in "Memories of a Working Woman's Guild", of those women whose lives and bodies she does not know. Their faces are not crossed by the variety of expressions of a woman of her own class. Their large hands "touched nothing lightly."<sup>14</sup> When they sit down to write, as they do in the book Woolf has prologued, they "gripped papers and pencils as if they were brooms."<sup>15</sup>

The second protagonist of this story has entered the stage: the broom. The chair and the broom return us to the scene of the reclining and the sweeping woman. They take us back to Chacel, another woman who feels estranged, like Woolf, from the bodies of others; in whose estrangement was also a non-recognition of her own body. As proof, she is quoted, again by Alba Rico, as saying, "I write like a horse."<sup>16</sup>

### Two women in the mist (i)

*Dos mujeres en la niebla* (Two Women in the Mist) is the title of a film my mother witnessed the shooting of in Bermeo, the place where I was born. My mother was eight years old at the time, deep in the postwar period, when film burst into its grey, sombre reality.

The title always called up images in my mind of women lost in the sea mists. One review summarises the film as follows: "Three survivors of a shipwreck take shelter in a lighthouse. Meanwhile, in a bar in the port, the young Romo, the lighthouse keeper's grandson, meets Mara, a beautiful young woman whom he falls in love with. A disappointing drama that struggles to hold the viewer's attention."<sup>17</sup> No trace of any women in the mist.

### Two women in the mist (ii)

I've never read *La Sinrazón*; but I have read some of Rosa Chacel's short stories from 1961, a year after the novel was published. The story the entire series is titled after, *Ofrenda a una virgen loca* (Offering to a Mad Virgin), provides something of an insight onto this enigmatic woman who sits on an armchair, resting her hand on her chest, who Javier Marías described as "insightful" and "ruthless with herself."<sup>18</sup>

The narrator of *Ofrenda a una virgen loca* is introduced as a “cannibal” who “goes out into the street like a wolf into the plains.”<sup>19</sup> During one of his outings he encounters the mad virgin, a poor, extravagantly-dressed, fifty-year old woman who walks among the crowd. Every so now and again, the woman stops in the middle of the street and raises her arm in a gesture that could be “stopping a car, but also saying goodbye or waving at someone very far away.”<sup>20</sup> A gesture that is no simple “movement of the hand,” which transfigures her into a “perfectly young woman, young as the spring itself, like the girls in the commercials.”<sup>21</sup>

The story, which describes the narrator's gradual self-estrangement, brings to mind another hallucinatory urban *dérive*, Edgar Allan Poe's *The Man of the Crowd* (1840). At the end of both stories, the “decrepit old man”<sup>22</sup> and the “mad virgin”, each of them the writers' alter ego —the choice of a male narrator by Chacel is unimportant; what matters is that the mad virgin is a woman— lose themselves in the crowd.

### Two women in the mist (iii)

This text has traced out the distances between two female figures of the mid-twentieth century, the intellectual middle class woman and the illiterate domestic servant. Rather than a real confrontation, juxtaposing the two figures incarnates two counterposed tasks: Arendt's *labour*, the tasks traditionally attributed to women of maintaining life; and thinking, a task not traditionally attributed to women.

I have given instances of female thinkers from the early twentieth century: Chacel, Zambrano, Arendt, Woolf. I have not mentioned earlier examples such as Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, also mentioned in “Elogio del aburrimiento”. Alba Rico tells of the punishment meted out to Sor Juana by her superiors. To force her to abandon her writing, she was sent to the convent kitchen.

Juana Inés de la Cruz always showed herself to be a free woman. In 1691 she published *Respuesta de la poetisa a la muy Ilustre sor Filotea de la Cruz* (The Poet's Response to Sor Filotea de la Cruz), countering the phrase from Saint Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, *Mulieres in Ecclesiis taceant, non enim permittitur eis loqui* (“Women are to keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak.”) In her letter, she laid out her cause as a final protest, and then gave up her writing after its publication and sold her large library.

The best-known portrait of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz was painted by Miguel Cabrera around 1750. She is sitting at her desk wearing the habit of the Order of Saint Jerome, with a medallion on her chest. Behind her are a clock and the books in her library. On the desk, her white hand rests on an open book. Again the expressive, resting hand of the woman who writes.

### Two women in the mist (iv)

From the twentieth to the seventeenth century, and from then to the fifteenth, through two books and the women who read and wrote them. The writings of Cristine de Pizan date from the early fifteenth century. De Pizan is the earliest known female writer; after being left a widow she wrote for her family's upkeep.

Miniatures from the period show the writer in different scenes. The same pose is repeated in each of them —similarly to other portraits of female writers, she is seen sitting on a chair in a room, surrounded by books. Her chair is no longer an armchair, but stands before a lectern, indicating her professional status and conveying her intellectual authority.

*The Book of the City of Women*, published in 1405 and making the writer a precursor of modern feminism, opens as follows:

One day as I was sitting alone in my study surrounded by books on all kinds of subjects, devoting myself to literary studies, my usual habit, my mind dwelt at length on the weighty opinions of various authors whom I had studied for a long time (...).<sup>23</sup>

De Pizan then begins to ask why so many men, "clergymen and laymen", vilify and censure women. She regrets having been born in the wrong body, and then asks:

—Oh, God! (...) Did You yourself not create woman in a very special way and since that time did You not give her all those inclinations which it please You for her to have?

Later, the answer to her pleas arrives in the form of three Ladies —Lady Reason, Lady Rectitude and Lady Providence. They find her sunken in sad thoughts, leaning on the arm of her chair with her cheek held in her hand. These lines remind me of a photo of Virginia Woolf in a typical posture of hers: head tilted, she cups her cheek, her fingers lightly touching her temple.

## Two women in the mist (v)

Three centuries earlier, Heloise tries to convince Abelard to abandon his plans for marriage:

You cannot care equally for a wife or with philosophy. How can you reconcile your scholarly work and your maids, your libraries and your cradles, books and spinning wheels, plumes and spindles? Will those whose task is to be absorbed in theological or philosophical meditation be able to bear the screams of babies, the lullabies of the nurses, the bustle of male or female domesticity? (...) The rich can do this for their palaces or homes are large enough to isolate themselves in, those whose opulence feels no expenses, those not daily crucified by material worries. But this is not the condition of intellectuals (philosophers), and those who must worry about money and material matters cannot do their work as theologians or philosophers.<sup>24</sup>

At the time when Heloise wrote to Abelard she was Abbess of Paraclet and was enjoying the privileges of retreat at her convent. There would be reason to suppose she was actually talking to herself as she addressed her lover.<sup>25</sup>

The letters between Abelard and Heloise have sometimes been published with an illustration from the *Roman de la Rose*, a thirteenth century allegorical poem. The lovers in the illustration are sitting on a bench. Both of their hands are raised with their palms open to signal animated conversation.

## Two women in the mist (vi)

A new figure has entered the scene here: orality. In spite of its expressive sonority, orality is at a disadvantage compared to writing, the silent figure this text is about. So that while it the expression of the speaker can be represented, as it is in the miniature of Abelard and Heloise, whatever was said between them can only be shown in writing.

The spoken words of the unlettered get carried away by the winds. Probably, the words spoken by the woman who cleaned for Chacel never got very far, they vanished like the dust swept by her broom. But the writer's words are still firmly set down on paper.

The title of my text, "A Rose is a Rose / One Rose and Another, Kind of Rose" relates analogously to the scene of the woman who thinks and the woman who sweeps. "A Rose is a Rose" represents literate culture; the

culture of writing. "One Rose and Another, Kind of Rose", illiterate, oral culture.<sup>26</sup>

This is not the first time "A Rose is a Rose" and "One Rose and Another, Kind of Rose" have been placed by side. The two phrases —the former an aphorism, a phrase that does not quite make a sentence— first appeared together as quotes at the beginning of a text I was commissioned to write for a catalogue twenty years ago. The text was titled "Insistencias" (Insistences) and was on Deleuze's notion of difference in repetition. Or something like that. The two phrases are written as follows:

"A Rose is a Rose"  
Gertrude Stein

"One Rose and Another, Kind of Rose"  
Inazia Ibarluzea

Stein and her aphorism need no introduction. With Virginia Woolf, the American author is one of the great writers of Modernist literature in the English language. Ibarluzea and her quasi-sentence do need introducing. Inazia Ibarluzea was my grandmother, one of my two grandmothers that Chacel was a little like. Actually, that is not true: although they were born around the same time, my grandmothers were born into a rural, working class environment; they never studied, did not write and never varnished their nails. They never swept anybody's home, but their mothers did.

When I was asked to write the text for the catalogue, my *amuma* Inazia, who was very precisely spoken, began to give up speech because of senile dementia. Nobody was ever going to quote her, so I decided that it was pertinent for me to. Quoting expressions of hers — "One rose and another, kind of rose" was an absurd, funny story she told— was a way to ensure that her words would not be carried away by the winds. Ever since then, I decided to quote my grandmothers' words —illiterate as they were, they belonged on the side of the woman who does not write, the bearer of a richness of orally transmitted language destined to disappear. To quote them whenever I had the chance.

I admit to my guilty conscience following that need to vindicate them. Like Virginia Woolf, I occupy a sitting body who finds it hard to put herself in the place of other bodies than mine.

## Two women in the mist (vii)

I reread *Ofrenda a una virgen loca*. I stop at one of the moments when the mad virgin stops in the street and raises her arm as if she were calling a taxi or waving at someone. In spite of everything, Chacel was certainly not indifferent to the gestures of others destined to be lost. Quite the opposite. Towards the end, as the narrator admires the woman making her insignificant gesture in the middle of the street, he says:

Tirelessly, with the same freshness and same impulse, the gesture burst forth, the line, the beauty that had not been seen. Because the one she was waiting for, myself or anyone else who, like me —a journalist, possessing success, possessing the public word that is disseminated from one end of the world to the other— could grant her reality, had not come in answer to her call.<sup>27</sup>

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Santiago Alba Rico, Carlos Fernández Liria, *El naufragio del hombre*, Hondarribia, Hiru, 2010, pp. 70-71.

<sup>2</sup> Esperanza Rodríguez, "El peso de la culpa o *La sinrazón* paradójica de Rosa Chacel". *Berceo*, no. 125, Logroño, 1993, pp. 127-136.

<sup>3</sup> José Ortega y Gasset, *La deshumanización del arte y otros ensayos de estética* (1925). Madrid, Espasa Calpe, 1987, p. 79.

<sup>4</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (1958), Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1998, p. 176.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 169.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Santiago Alba Rico, "Las ventajas de estar hueco (en un mundo demasiado lleno)", *Ladinamo*, 30. 15-07-09. <http://www.rebelion.org/noticia.php?id=88663> (accessed 29-06-18)

<sup>9</sup> Andrés Trapiello, "Adiós a una maestra: enteramente libre", *El País*. 29-07-94.

<sup>10</sup> "Professions for Women" (1931). Virginia Woolf, *Selected Essays*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 144.

<sup>11</sup> In "Memories of a Working Women's Guild" (1931). Virginia Woolf, *Selected Essays*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009, pp. 146-159.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 149.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 152.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

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<sup>17</sup> In *decine21. Diario digital de cine y series*. <http://decine21.com/peliculas/dos-mujeres-en-la-niebla-29744> (accessed 29-06-18)

<sup>18</sup> Javier Marías, "Adiós a una maestra. Todas las edades", *El País*. 29-07-94.

<sup>19</sup> Rosa Chacel, *Balaam y otros cuentos*, Barcelona, Mondadori, 1989, p. 28. Online version. <https://es.scribd.com/document/151901081/Rosa-Chacel-Balaam-Cuentos> (accessed 29-06-18)

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>22</sup> "The Man of the Crowd" (1840), Edgar Allan Poe, *Tales of Mystery and Imagination*, Hertfordshire, Wordsworth Classics, 1993, p. 392.

<sup>23</sup> Christine de Pizán, *The Book of The City of Ladies*, <https://history.hanover.edu/courses/excerpts/165pisan.html> (accessed 29-06-18)

<sup>24</sup> Translated from: Jacques Le Goff, *Los intelectuales en la Edad Media* (1957), Barcelona, Gedisa, 1986, p. 51.

<sup>25</sup> On other aspects of the translation of this passage, see "Astonishing Heloise" by Barbara Newman. *London Review of Books*. Vol. 36, no. 2. 23-01-14, pp. 5-7.

<sup>26</sup> "A rose is a rose," as we know, also refers to the concept of orality.

<sup>27</sup> Barbara Newman, *op. cit.* p. 32.