

# Windows: on Post-Dictatorial Openings, Thresholds, and Opacities

INÉS MOLINA

Centro de Arte Tabacalera-La Casa  
Invisible, Málaga  
ORCID: 0000-0003-4100-393X

JULIANE DEBEUSSCHER

Universidad Nacional de  
Educación a Distancia, Madrid  
ORCID: 0000-0001-9597-0445

LOLA VISGLERIO-GÓMEZ

Museo Reina Sofía, Madrid  
ORCID: 0000-0003-3177-1038



1.

Is it possible to identify the precise moment when a dictatorship ends and a post-dictatorship begins? The idea of a clear line drawn by the death of the dictator, or by institutional changes which would clearly define the before and after is certainly misleading. This is especially true when some administrations and actors remain in place, and when public recognition of the crimes committed by the previous regime is deferred indefinitely. The idea of a radical shift from one state to another is also problematic, because it contributes to invisibilising the long and tortuous processes towards change, in which citizens and grassroots movements play a central role.

Rather than looking for unambiguous symbols that claim to embody this rupture and celebrate it, can we instead recover visible signs or patterns that suggest another temporality for transformation, and show its unfolding over a longer period of time, albeit necessarily troubled and uneven? Less ostentatious and less noisy, yet persistent clues, or symptoms, like a handful of grass sprouting beneath stones.

Windows are liminal elements or structures whose crossing implies a transition or a passage from one condition, or state, to another. Their literal and metaphorical occurrence in marginal and alternative publications printed in Spain in the early years following the end of the dictatorship (from 1975 on) is not fortuitous. It raises questions about the multiple meanings and nuances attributed to them, their evocative power, and their persuasive force when it comes to express the feeling of 'opening up' of new horizons — both in a physical and symbolic sense.

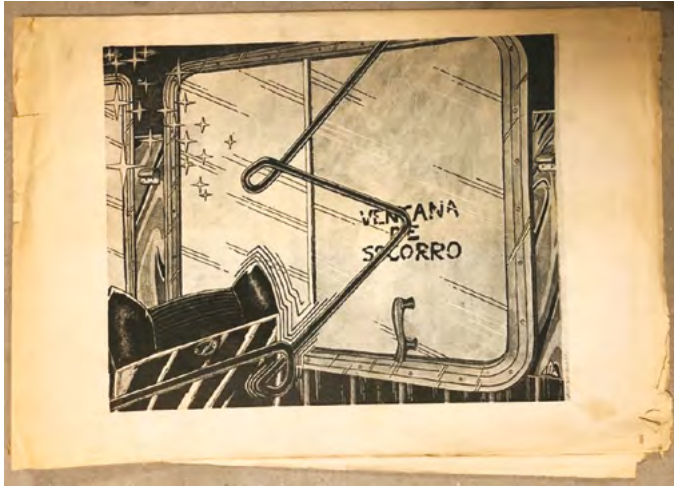
Windows of different sorts populate these pages. Tenuous openings in prison cells, from which it is hard to tell on which side we stand — inside or out. Reflective and blind surfaces in large urban settlements that highlight the dehumanisation of these new suburbs where the working class, often after rural exodus, is confined and subjected to asphyxiating spaces and times of production. Thresholds which, if crossed, make social interaction possible but also, sometimes, accentuate the solitude of individual subjects. Gates to highly uncertain yet beautiful new spaces and landscapes, that bring in fresh air and light as a metaphor for change.

As openings, windows take on new meanings when the conceptions and uses of exterior and interior are altered and transformed. They reflect changes in someone's exposure to different gazes and forms of authority, and in their progressive liberation from decades of occultation. They manifest diverse visual options, which the possibility of going out freely onto the street redefines and connects with the (re)appearance of a collective body that had never ceased to exist.

2.



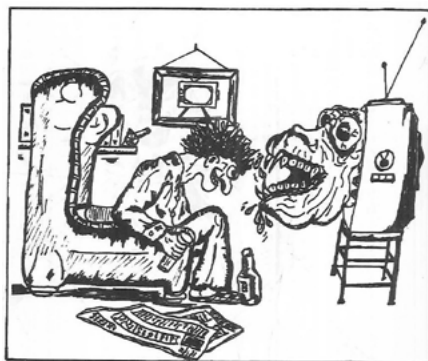
3.



4.



5.



1974 miles de presos Políticos, el Pueblo pide:

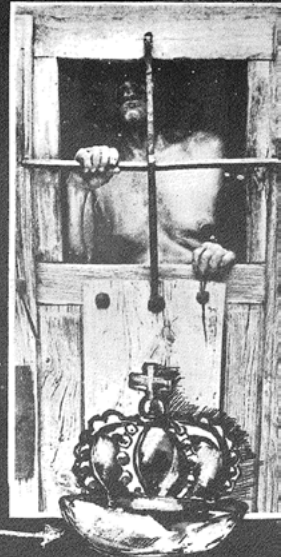


1975 Coronacion de un REY  
..... el PUEBLO pide:

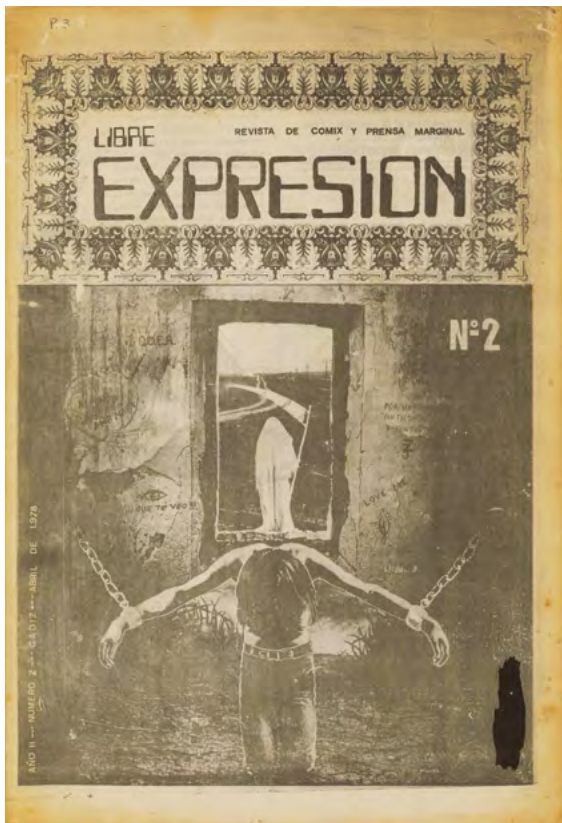


AMNISTIA!!!  
S.M. y Gobierno  
conceden:

INDULTO  
y  
salen algunos.....



6.



7.

I look through our images, photos, scans of physical pages recovered from archives, and think about windows. The truth is that I don't think about any specific representation, but rather the idea of a window. Why are there so many on these pages? What is a window? Is it an opening in an enclosed space? The condition of possibility of light and air? Of the private and the public?

Is a page a window?

8.



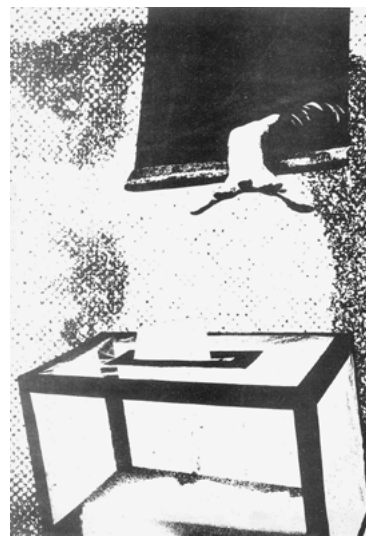
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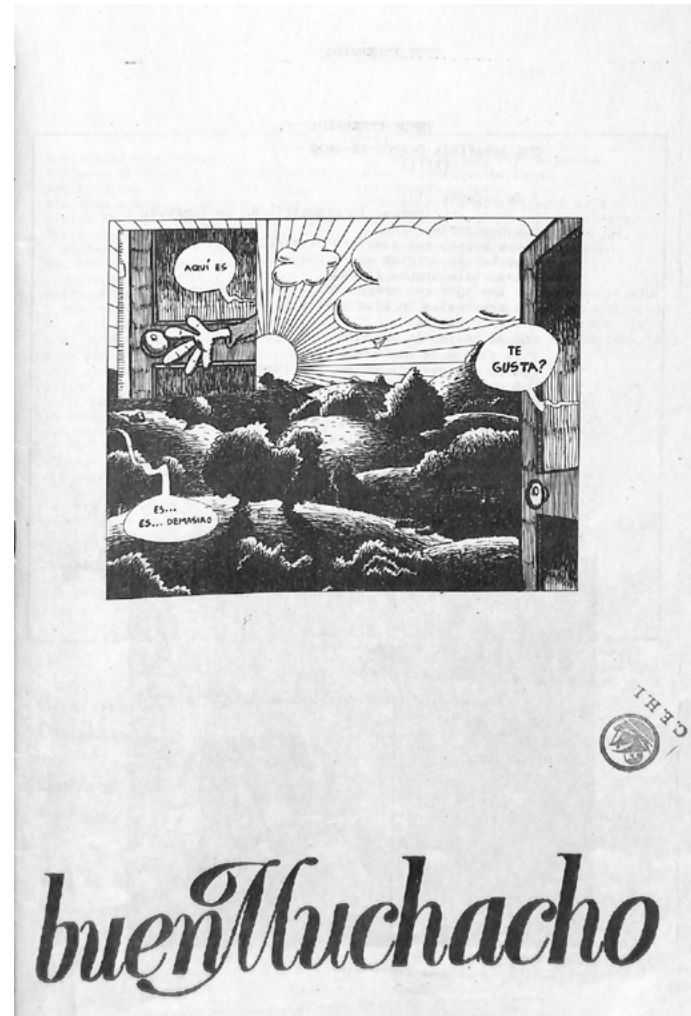
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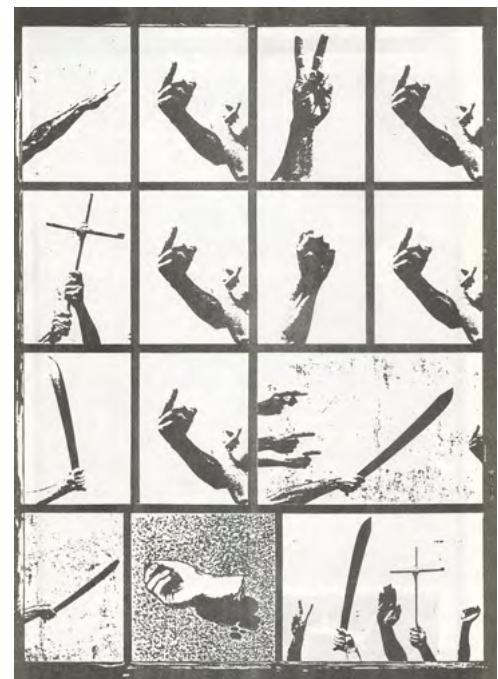
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10.



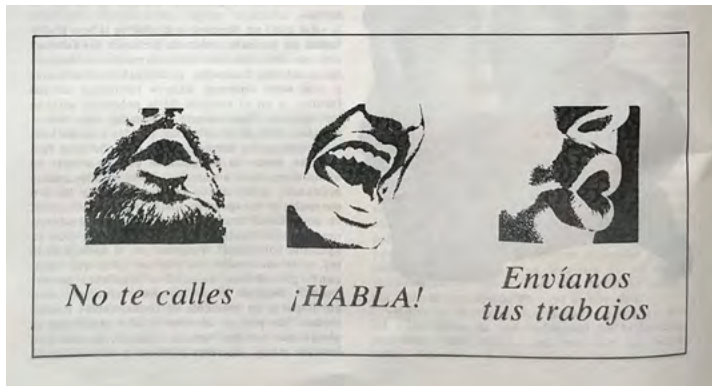
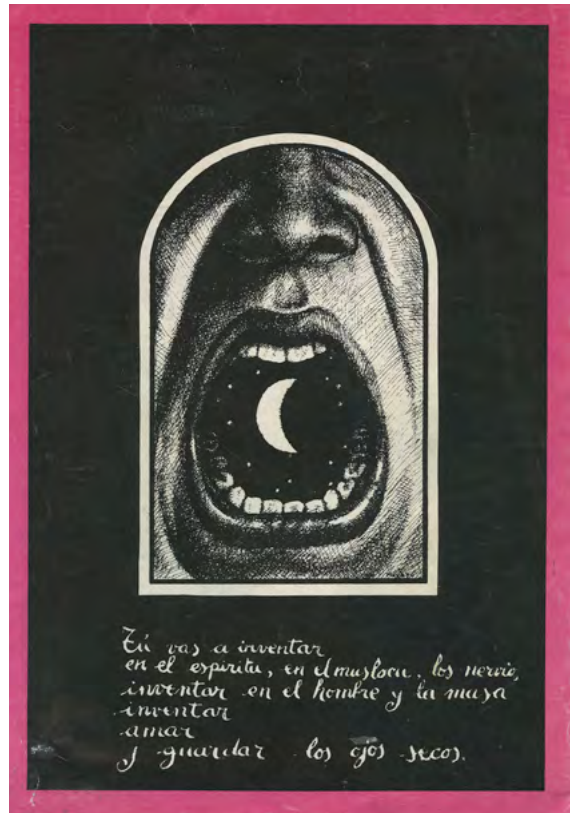
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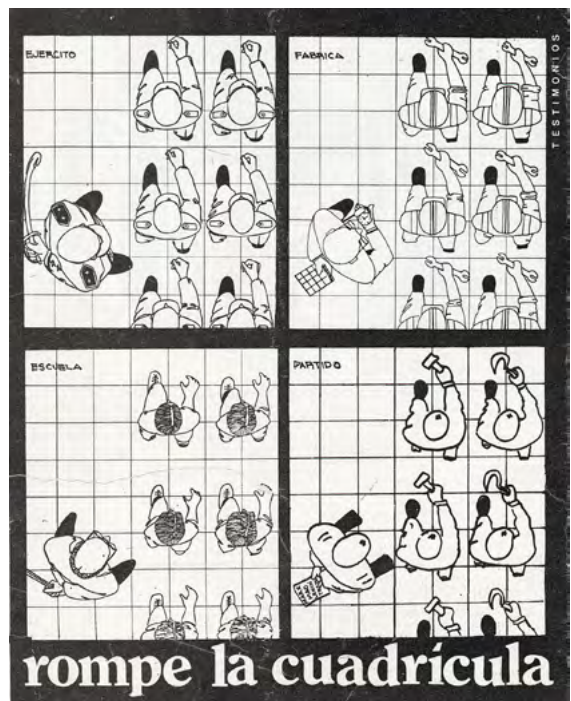


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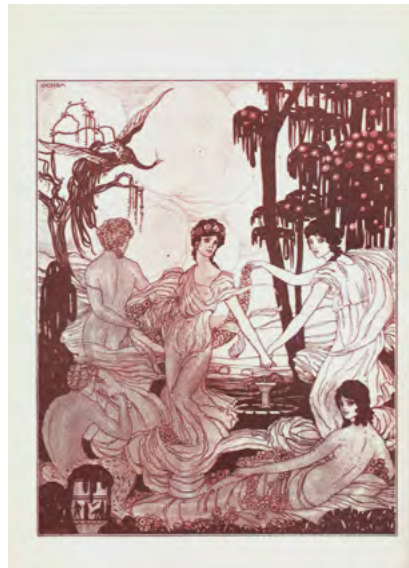
16.

The marginal press that emerged after the Franco regime seems to act as a window for unfiltered and uncensored expressions. In some way, these pages were spaces to articulate frustrations, but also desires and imagined futures. The barred face cries out 'Enough!' in *Ateneo* [Athenaeum], a publication edited in Madrid's Usera neighbourhood — They didn't want their mouths, their eyes, to be prisons anymore. They wanted to remove the bars from the windows.



17.

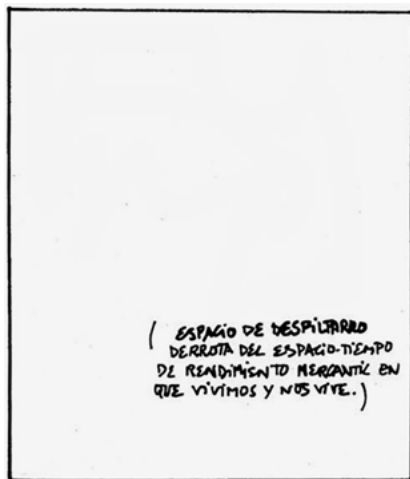
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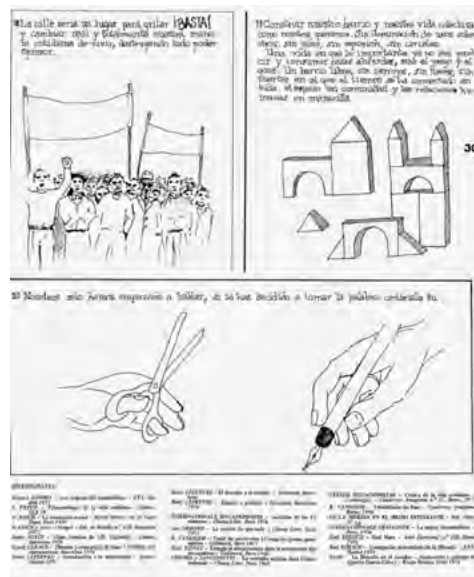
19.



These publications are also interfaces, windows between fiction and reality. I am looking now at the cover of *Buen muchacho* [Good Lad], and see a hand opening a window, revealing a sunny, fragrant, dreamy landscape. Was this the moment when the dream finally came true? Could our dreams — an idyllic enclave, far removed from the grey asphalt city — finally happen?



20.



21.



22.

UN amanecer NO SE improvisa al PIAJO,  
 NI SE CAHUELA BAGO EL LECHO DIMINUTO de los recién nacidos,  
 SE CONQUISTA CON LOS OJOS desesperadamente abiertos.  
 en carne viva desde la madrugada,  
 sin CAPE, sin caricias ni alfileres.  
 UN AMANECEER NO ES UN MILAGRO,  
 ES EL DOLOR DE MILES DE SERES que aún esperan  
 con OJOS Rabiosamente abiertos  
 la mañana.

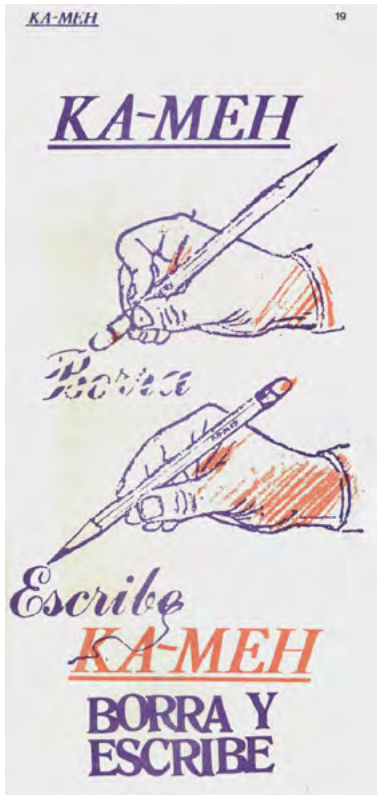
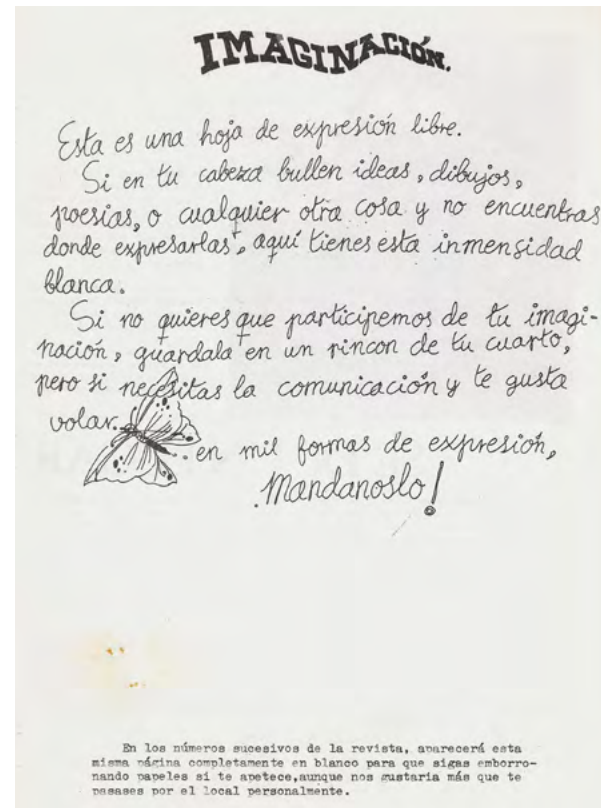
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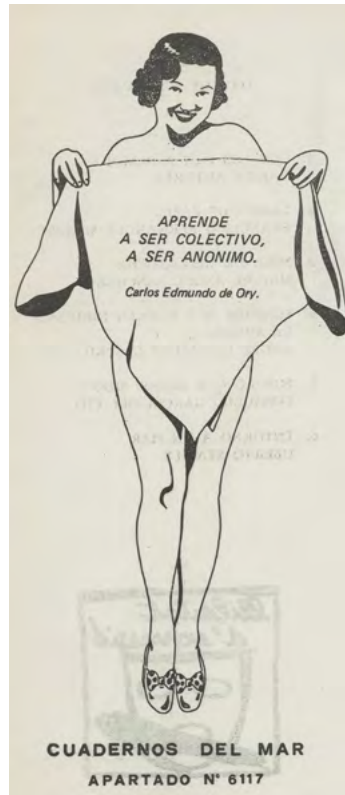
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25.



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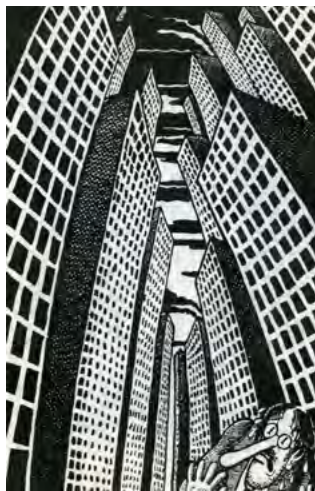
27.

Statement: post-dictatorships provoke multiple openings and beginnings. In *Uronia*, they say: 'A sunrise is not a miracle; it is the pain of thousands of beings who still wait for the morning with eyes wide open'. A sunrise is a beginning between many others. Another beginning can be spied behind the rickety door in the bulletin of the Libertarian Athenaeum of 'Kantabria' (Cantabria), and I think of the aftermath of a war, or a famine.

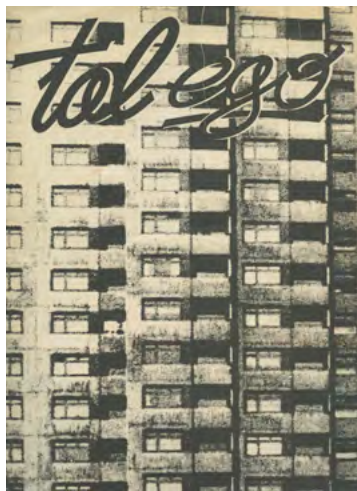
Has the time come for the suffering to end? History is never linear, and yet it throws up exceptions, rifts, fictions that say: yes, at last.

On the pages we find a hand opening a window to witness a sunrise. Hands on. They are constantly intertwined with hands that draw, write, and cut with scissors. They are shaping a reality to come — through the pages? Through publishing?

We could also think about the meeting of hands on these printed surfaces as a metaphor, but also a reality. They speak of loneliness, sadness, and anguish (on the cover of the periodical *Mmm...!!* you can read 'Nos sentimos verdaderamente solos... Sniff' [We feel truly alone... Sniff]). They speak of the desire to find each other — through these communication projects, papers. Another prison with bars could be the urban grid that traps bodies, words, and desires. The city enhances solitude. And now I look at the vignette in *Baladas urbanas* [Urban Ballads], or the cover of *Talego* [Long Sack]. And especially at the page in *Catarsis* [Catharsis], where you can see a shapeless smoker with flowers and wild plants sprouting from his jacket. And here comes the herb hypothesis — *Mala hierba* [Bad Weed] is the name of another marginal periodical, but it can also be a way of thinking about these rebellious publications that grow between the cracks in the sidewalks and flower beds.



30.

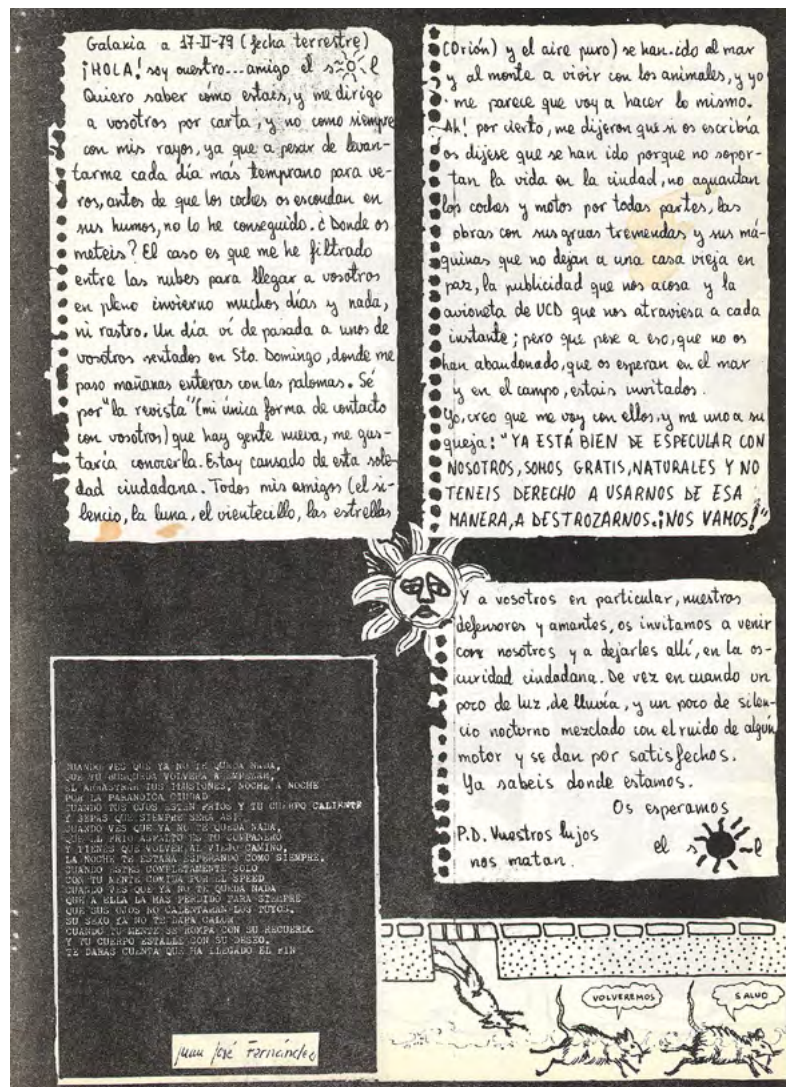


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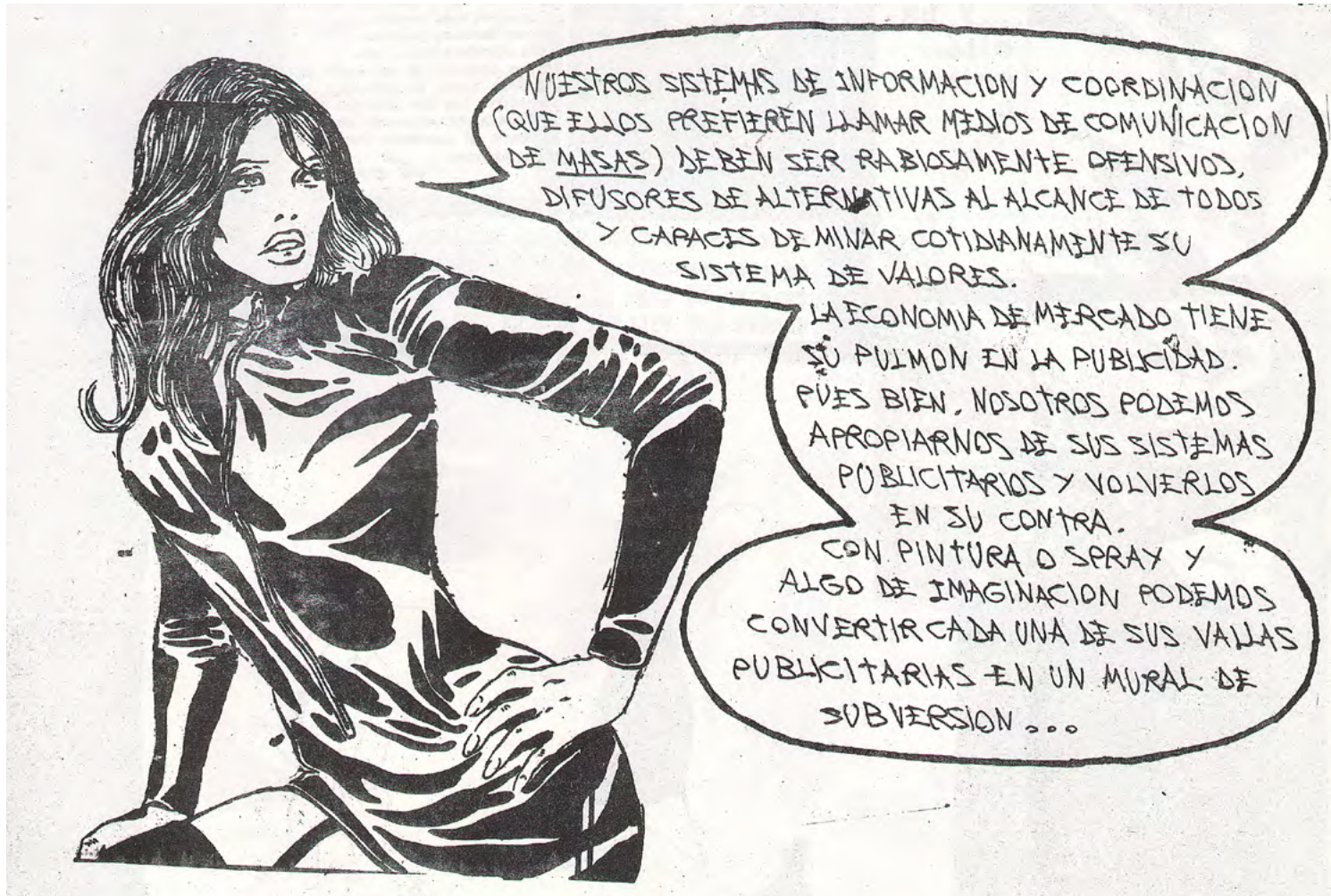


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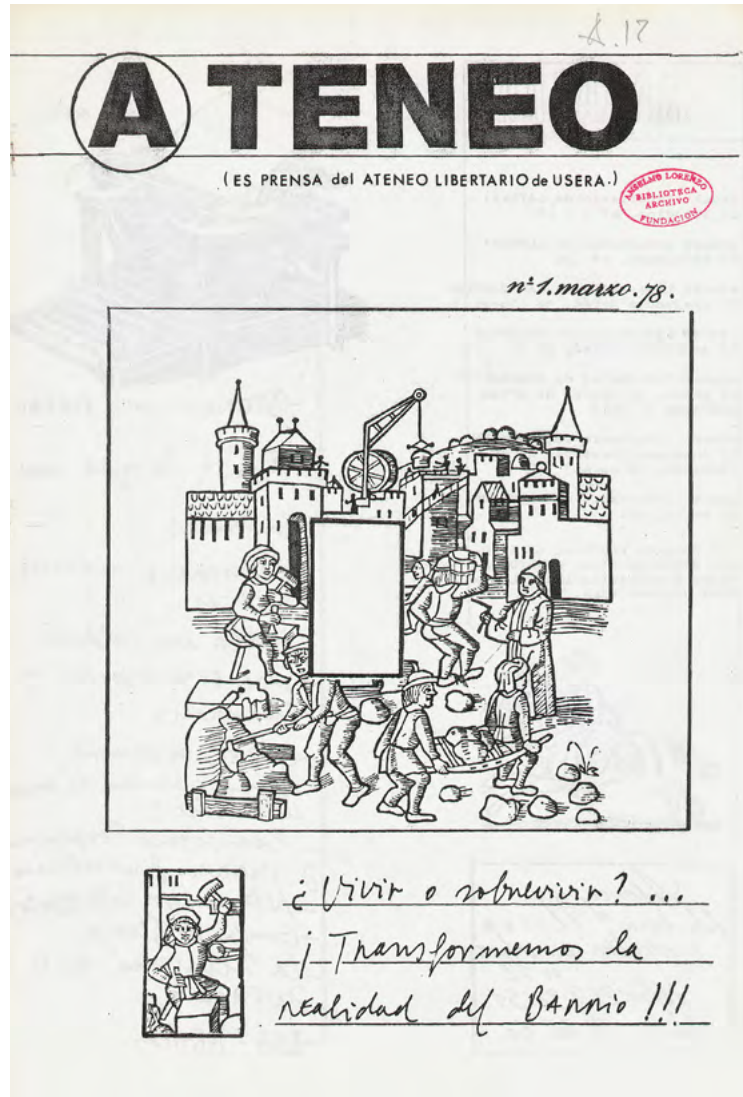


The marginal press is a place counterposed to architecture. In *Ajoblanco* they talk about 'the beautiful frigidity of progressive architecture and the modern city'. The city is a programmed, aseptic, and austere grid that suffocates. And I wonder — what would a vital, vitalistic architecture be like? Stubble, wild pages. Wild gardens without fences.



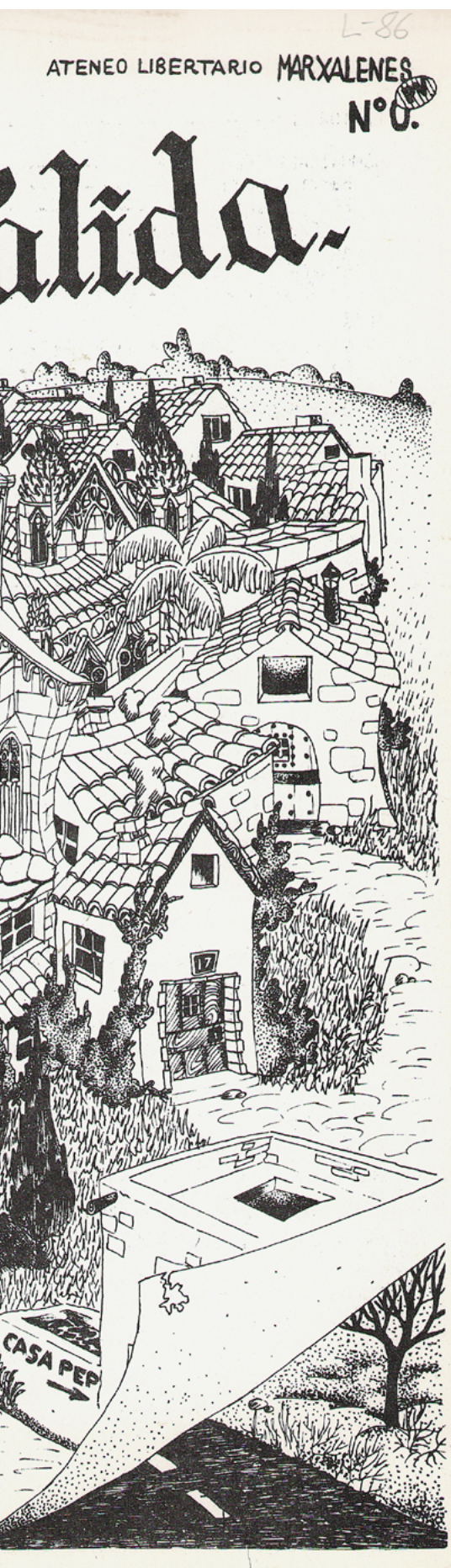


39.



Statement: between fiction and reality there is a window that is a communicating passage, a threshold, and this window is built in these pages.



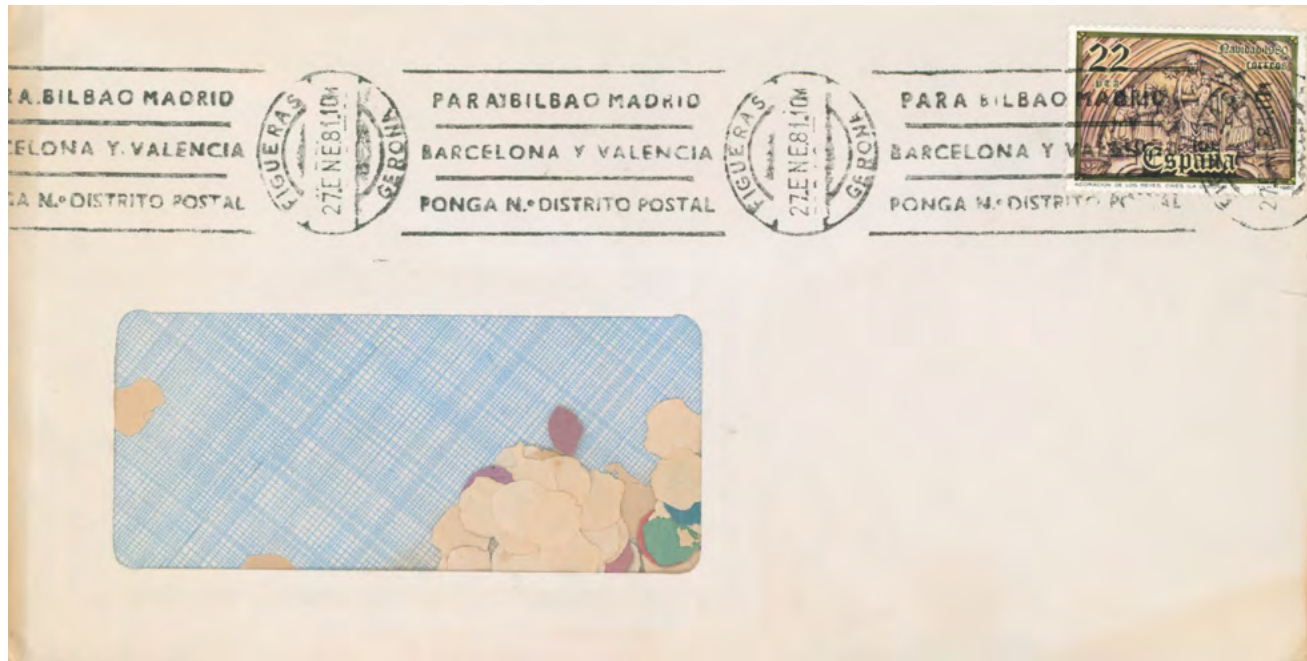


Post-dictatorships are exceptional moments in terms of visibility. In many ways, the periods that follow the end of a dictatorship are presented as openness, clarity, and purity — a blank canvas for a new beginning. Yet history shows that the end of an authoritarian regime does not grant all social sectors the same degree of freedom, recognition, or representation, nor does it remain faithful to that visibility when it comes to the elements of the dictatorial past that are best kept in darkness.

It is therefore worth asking: what time and space of visibility does the post-dictatorial scopic regime allow and for whom? Or, put differently, what can and cannot be seen, or be made visible after the death of a dictator? How, and when, does one allow oneself to be seen in the streets — what clothes to wear, what words to choose, what magazines to read, what banners to carry? But also, what role does darkness play in a time of apparent (media) visibility, (political) openness, and (democratic) clarity? How are the desired darkness and secrecy to be safeguarded against the false political and securitarian transparency of those early moments of hope — but also of fear and distrust — that a change of regime brings about?

There is a great deal of darkness in the marginal press publications of post-Franco Spain — a darkness that coexists with flashes of light slipping through the gaps of windows, doors, grilles, and holes of various kinds. The relationship with a new visibility is clear; the very first definition of ‘window’ contains within it the words ‘wall’, ‘look’, and ‘light’: the window as a barrier to break (the wall), a means to permit an action once forbidden (to look), and the element through which to carry it out (the light). Yet, as noted, in these images the windows contain as much light as darkness and opacity. And somewhere within the images — or rather, in the encompassing gaze that brings them together — the material and social realities, not always clear or unambiguous, of post-dictatorial ‘democratic openness’ in Spain are quietly suggested.

The exercise of placing them together reveals how the drawings, inscriptions, texts, collages, and photographs that fill these pages trace an escape from the uniformity, transparency, and homogeneity with which Spain’s post-dictatorship has been narrated, while simultaneously revealing some of the complexities that defined the process. Within them we find silence, confusion, fear, but also hope, and a horizon of expectations imagined by hand, with pencil on paper. The people involved in these alternative and marginal periodicals turned the wall into a window, the window into a page, and the page into a new public sphere in which to meet.



41.

- Fig. 1** Cover and back cover of *El Coco*, n. 1 (Madrid, April 1977). Demetrio Enrique Brisset's personal archives.
- Fig. 2** Inside page of *Ateneo Libertario de Kantabria* [Libertarian Atheneum of Kantabria], n. 1 (Santander, August 1977). Inés Molina's personal archives.
- Fig. 3** Inside page of *El Rollo Higiénico* [The Toilet Roll], n. 1 (Sevilla, 1978). Tebeosfera.
- Fig. 4** Antonio Madrigal, untitled. Catalogue of the Mail Art exhibition 'Negro sobre blanco', La Casa del Siglo XV, Segovia. Organised by Atelier Bonanova and directed by José Luis Mata. 21 October to 8 November, 1978. Courtesy Collection and Archive of Jiří Valoch, Moravian Gallery in Brno.
- Fig. 5** Inside page of *Zaranda. Revista libertaria de Andalucía* [Zaranda. Andalusian Libertarian Magazine], n. 0 (February — March 1979). Hemeroteca Municipal de Sevilla.
- Fig. 6** 'Amnistía total' [Total Amnesty], inside page of *El Coco*, n. 1 (Madrid, April 1977). Demetrio Enrique Brisset's personal archives.
- Fig. 7** Cover of *Libre Expresión* [Free Expression], n. 2, second year (Cádiz, April 1978). Biblioteca José Celestino Mutis, Cádiz.
- Fig. 8** Inside page of *Ajoblanco*, 'Especial Prensa Marginal' [Special Issue on Marginal Press] (Barcelona, October 1978). Archivo Ajoblanco-pepe ribas.
- Fig. 9** Inside page of *Ajoblanco*, 'Especial Prensa Marginal' [Special Issue on Marginal Press] (Barcelona, October 1978). Archivo Ajoblanco-pepe ribas.
- Fig. 10** Cover of *Buen muchacho* [Good Lad], n. 3 (Barcelona, April 1977). CRAI Pavelló de la República — University of Barcelona.
- Fig. 11** Inside page of *Ajoblanco*, 'O indulto o arrasamos las cárceles' [Amnesty or we'll tear down the prisons], n. 28 (Barcelona, December 1977). Archivo Ajoblanco-pepe ribas.
- Fig. 12** Cover of *El Coco*, n. 2 (Madrid, June 1977). Demetrio Enrique Brisset's personal archives.
- Fig. 13** Back cover of *Uronia*, n. 2 (Madrid, ca. 1978). Anselmo Lorenzo Foundation for Libertarian Studies.
- Fig. 14** '¡Ya vale!' [Enough is enough!], inside page of *Ateneo*, n. 3 (Libertarian Atheneum of Usera, Madrid, 1979). Anselmo Lorenzo Foundation for Libertarian Studies.
- Fig. 15** 'Tú vas a inventar...' [You are going to invent], back cover of *El pollo urbano. Revista especializada en artes* [The Urban Chicken. Magazine Specializing in the Arts], n. 3 (Zaragoza, spring 1977). Dionisio Sánchez' personal archives.

- Fig. 16** Inside page of *Kábila. Colectivo de cultura popular* [Kábila. Popular Culture Collective], n. 6 (Córdoba, February–March 1979). Biblioteca Provincial de Córdoba.
- Fig. 17** ‘Escuela, ejército, cárcel, cuadrícula’ [School, army, prison, grid], inside page of *La Barricada*, n. 0 (Libertarian Youth of Valencia, 1978). Anselmo Lorenzo Foundation for Libertarian Studies.
- Fig. 18** Back cover of *Zaranda. Revista libertaria de Andalucía* [Zaranda. Andalusian Libertarian Magazine], n. 0 (February — March 1979). Hemeroteca Municipal de Sevilla.
- Fig. 19** Cover of *Por una sexualidad libre. Órgano del Movimiento Homosexual de Acción Revolucionaria* [For a Free Sexuality. Organ of the Homosexual Movement for Revolutionary Action], n. 1 (Sevilla, June 1978). Armand de Fluvià Documentation Center.
- Fig. 20** Inside page of *Ajoblanco*, n. 12 (Barcelona, April 1976). Archivo Ajoblanco-pepe ribas.
- Fig. 21** ‘Nuestro barrio es intolerable!’ [Our neighbourhood is unbearable!], inside page of *Ajoblanco*, n. 16 (Barcelona, November 1976). Archivo Ajoblanco-pepe ribas.
- Fig. 22** ‘Un amanecer no se improvisa al piano...’ [A sunrise cannot be improvised on the piano], inside page of *Uronia*, n. 4 (Madrid, May 1976). Anselmo Lorenzo Foundation for Libertarian Studies.
- Fig. 23** Back cover of *Ateneo Libertario Zona Centro* [Libertarian Atheneum Downtown Area], n. 1 (Madrid, 1978). CRAI Pavelló de la República — University of Barcelona.
- Fig. 24** Back cover of *Nuestro barrio es intolerable* [Our Neighbourhood is Unbearable] (Baix Llobregat, 1978). Xavier Oller’s personal archives.
- Fig. 25** ‘Imaginación’ [Imagination], inside page of *Crisálida*, n. 0 (Libertarian Atheneum of Marxalenes, Valencia, 1979). Anselmo Lorenzo Foundation for Libertarian Studies.
- Fig. 26** Inside page of *Ka-meh*, n. 1-2 (Granada, August 1977). Biblioteca de Andalucía.
- Fig. 27** Front of the bookmark made by the publishing house Cuadernos del Mar (1980). Inés Molina’s personal archives, courtesy of Uberto Stabile.
- Fig. 28** ‘Nos sentimos verdaderamente solos...’ [We feel truly alone], cover of *Mmm*, n. 1 (Equipo Antípodas, Madrid, 1976). Alberto García-Alix’ personal archives.

- Fig. 29** Back cover of *Catarsis. Revista de crítica y cultura* [Catharsis. Magazine of Criticism and Culture], n. 4 (Córdoba, June 1983). Biblioteca Provincial de Córdoba.
- Fig. 30** Back cover of *Baladas urbanas* [Urban Ballads] (Pere Joan, Barcelona, 1976). La web sense nom.
- Fig. 31** Cover of *Talego* (Colectivo Talego, Bilbao, 1978), unnumbered. Inés Molina's personal archives.
- Fig. 32** 'Comunicaciones' [Communications], inside page of *Érase una vez... una revista antiautoritaria* [Once Upon a Time... An Anti-Authoritarian Magazine], n. 3 (Murcia, n.d.). CRAI Pavelló de la República — University of Barcelona.
- Fig. 33** Inside page of *Ajoblanco*, n. 16 (Barcelona, November 1976). Archivo Ajoblanco-pepe ribas.
- Fig. 34** 'Un mundo frío, seco y aparte...' [A cold, dry, and separate world], cover of *La julandrona atípica* [The atypical julandrona], unnumbered (Barcelona, 1981). CRAI Pavelló de la República — University of Barcelona.
- Fig. 35** 'Nuestros sistemas de información y coordinación...' [Our information and coordination systems...], inside page of *Érase una vez... una revista antiautoritaria* [Once Upon a Time... An Anti-Authoritarian Magazine], unnumbered (January, 1979). CRAI Pavelló de la República — University of Barcelona.
- Fig. 36** '¡Necesitamos un teléfono para comunicarnos!' [We need a phone to communicate!], back cover of *TRICOCO. Coordinación de tribus comunas y cooperativas* [TRICOCO. Coordination of Communal Tribes and Cooperatives], n. 3 (Barcelona, 1977). CRAI Pavelló de la República — University of Barcelona.
- Fig. 37** 'Hace tiempo que pienso que no hay tiempo...' [I have long believed that there is no time], inside page of *Ateneo Libertario Zona Centro*, n. 0 (Madrid, 1978). CRAI Pavelló de la República — University of Barcelona.
- Fig. 38** 'Nuestro barrio es intolerable!' [Our neighbourhood is unbearable!], inside page of *Ajoblanco*, n. 16 (Barcelona, November 1976). Archivo Ajoblanco-pepe ribas.
- Fig. 39** Cover of *Ateneo*, n. 1 (Libertarian Atheneum of Usera, Madrid, March 1978). Anselmo Lorenzo Foundation for Libertarian Studies.
- Fig. 40** Cover of *Crisálida*, n. 0 (Libertarian Atheneum of Marxalenes-Benicalap, Valencia, 1979). Anselmo Lorenzo Foundation for Libertarian Studies.
- Fig. 41** Josep Maria Joan i Rosa. Untitled mail art work. 1981. Courtesy Collection and Archive of Jiří Valoch, Moravian Gallery in Brno.