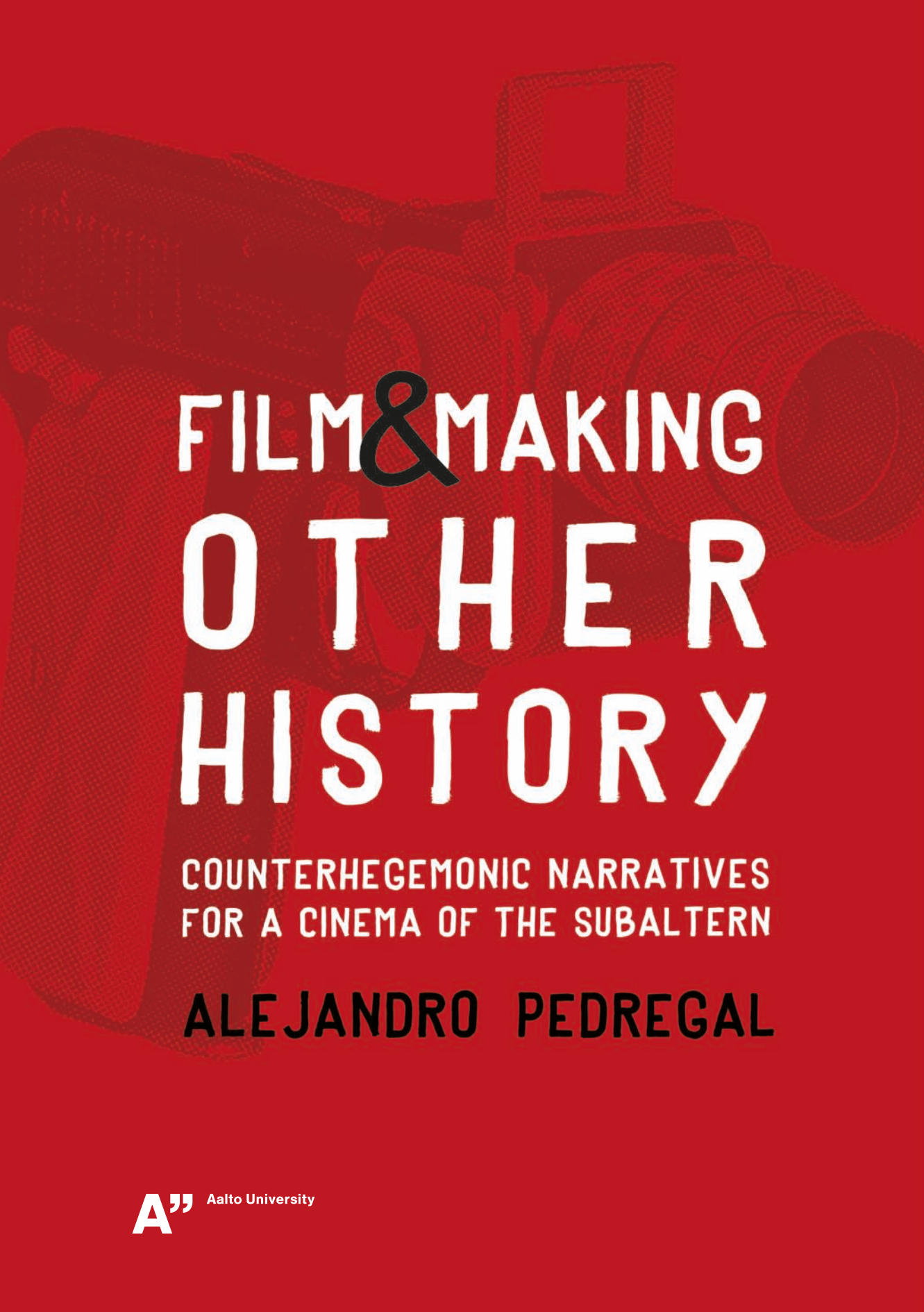


FILM & MAKING OTHER HISTORY

COUNTERHEGEMONIC NARRATIVES FOR A CINEMA OF THE SUBALTERN

ALEJANDRO PEDREGAL

Aalto University

FILM&MAKING OTHER HISTORY

COUNTERHEGEMONIC NARRATIVES FOR A CINEMA OF THE SUBALTERN

ALEJANDRO PEDREGAL

Department of Film, Television and Scenography
Aalto University, Helsinki
2015

Aalto University publication series
DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS 25/2015

School of Arts, Design and Architecture
Aalto ARTS Books
Helsinki
books.aalto.fi

Graphic design: Anja-Lisa Hirscher and Gaspar Mostafá

Materials: Munken Pure 300 g and 120 g

Fonts: Parable and Museo Sans

ISBN 978-952-60-6098-9 (printed)
ISBN 978-952-60-6099-6 (pdf)
ISSN-L 1799-4934
ISSN 1799-4934 (printed)
ISSN 1799-4942 (pdf)

Printed in Unigrafia, Finland
2015

In memoriam Lilia Ferreyra and Eduardo Galeano.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to especially thank my head supervisor and advisor, professor Lily Díaz, who followed the entire research and writing process of this study. Her sharp feedback, discussion and suggestions for alternative approaches in spite of my frequently stubborn views, as well as her encouragement for me to always stand up and go on, made it possible for me to continue even in the most desperate moments. She was always careful and precise with every detail, closely observing my work and contributing critically to its development. It is not an exaggeration to say that I could have never finished this study without her empowering dedication.

I am also grateful to Satu Kyösola for all the support she gave to me as well as to this work over the years. Her comments were always extremely helpful. I could have never finished this research without the support of the Elomedia 4 research project she directed and, in this regard, I extend my thankfulness to the board of it, which included Eija Timonen, the head of the board, Lily Díaz, Taisto Hujanen, Jan Kaila, Johanna Moisander, Pirkko Oittinen, Merja Salo, Jukka Sihvonen, Kalev Tiits, Markku Uimonen and Jukka Kortti, and especially the coordinator, Michaela Bränn.

I would like to thank Kirsi Rinne, Susanna Helke, the missing and beloved Peter von Bagh, Jarmo Lampela, Ilkka Mertsola, Laura Gröndahl and all those wonderful people from the Department of Film, Television and Scenography of Aalto University that, in one way or another, helped me during this long journey.

I want to express my gratitude to professor Cristina Venegas from the University of California Santa Barbara for supervising my work in its final stages and providing me with her bright, insightful comments. I also want to mention the great contributions of Marcia Landy, distinguished professor from the University of Pittsburgh, and scholar Mariano Mestman, from the University of Buenos Aires, whose examination of my work helped me to rethink and re-evaluate certain aspects of it. I also would like to thank Ana M. López, professor from Tulane University, for serving as my opponent during this dissertation's defence.

I would like to recognise the contribution of my great friend and colleague Adrián Aragonés, with whom I have worked writing several film scripts and developing other projects since the mid 2000's. Due to our common interest in Latin America, Adrián got immediately excited about idea of working on a script about Rodolfo Walsh when I first proposed it, as we both were surprised by how unknown he was outside Argentina. We not only started to share documentation and sources, but, out of pure passion for the project, Adrián joined me for portions of my trips to Argentina. His contribution to this project has been substantial, par-

ticularly to the film script. Without our intense collaboration, it would not have been possible. In this sense, I must also thank Diego del Pozo, researcher from the University of Helsinki, for his enriching contributions, who, captivated by Walsh's significance within the Latin American literary scene, joined us for a few weeks on our first trip to Argentina.

I would like to thank my dear friend Alberto *Lalo* Recanatini, award-winning Argentine investigative journalist and screenwriter, who, when he found out about the script, offered to work for the project as a consultant, assisting with certain historical aspects of the research, the dramatic structure and the proper Argentine use of the Spanish language. His collaboration was key to shaping the final draft of the script.

I am also very grateful to all those in Argentina, as well as in Cuba, Uruguay and other parts in Latin America, who collaborated and spoke openly to me as part of this research. I name most of them in Appendix 1, but I would like to especially mention Lilia Ferreyra, Rodolfo Walsh's last wife, and writer Eduardo Galeano, to whom I decided to dedicate the book when I found out about their recent deaths. Their collaboration was relevant to the development of this study, but, above all, they were profoundly inspirational to me in many other ways. I had hoped that I could show them the final result of the work when it was ready, but even if that won't be possible, I will always be thankful for their lessons. They will be missed.

I also want to thank Mary Morgan, who proofread the text, cleaning up my occasionally clumsy English. And also the publishing editor, Sanna Tyyri-Pohjonen for her help and wise advice, as well as the designers of the book, Anja-Lisa Hirscher and Gaspar Mostafá, for the beautiful work they did to bring the study to readers in a more appealing way. In this regard, I must underscore that communication with them, as well as their understanding of the project, flowed perfectly under very demanding circumstances.

Last but not least, I would like to express my great gratitude to all my family, friends, other biped beings and a few quadruped ones, who have supported me throughout what at times felt like an endless odyssey, tolerating my occasionally outrageous behaviour during this period without questioning my sanity.

"The writing of history becomes ever more difficult. The power of God or the weakness of man, Christianity or the divine right of kings to govern wrong, can easily be made responsible for the downfall of states and the birth of new societies. Such elementary conceptions lend themselves willingly to narrative treatment and from Tacitus to Macaulay, from Thucydides to Green, the traditionally famous historians have been more artist than scientist: they wrote so well because they saw so little. To-day by a natural reaction we tend to a personification of the social forces, great men being merely or nearly instruments in the hands of economic destiny. As so often the truth does not lie in between. Great men make history, but only such history as it is possible for them to make. Their freedom of achievement is limited by the necessities of their environment. To portray the limits of those necessities and the realisation, complete or partial, of all possibilities, that is the true business of the historian".

C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins*

INTRODUCTION

UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD THROUGH NARRATIVE

Understanding the world and people's behavior within it, their motivations, interests, goals, desires, needs, meanings and aims, those are just some of the few inquiries that surround our very existence; inquiries intimately related to our practice in every field that consequently boost our intellect; inquiries that, in interpreting and representing reality, share certain realms with narrative endeavours; inquiries that are key for addressing, challenging and shifting our culture, the way we understand the world and transform it.

This study results from a series of methodical reflections that have accompanied the research and writing process of the film script *They Call Me Rodolfo Walsh* (*Me*

Llaman Rodolfo Walsh), introduced in the appendices at the end of this work. These reflections were generated by placing this practice in confrontation with others dealing with shared concerns, as well as those with opposite concerns, in the dialectical search for new meanings. They are directly related to the area of historical and biographical narratives and their realms of interpretation and representation. Thus, certain film and literary practices that have explored and challenged the established boundaries of these domains serve in this study as inspirational tools for developing a transformative proposal, as they have faced hegemonic positions dominating cultural production and developed alternative forms to them.

They Call Me Rodolfo Walsh is a script about a real character and based on real events: the life and work of Argentine writer and journalist Rodolfo Walsh and the historical environment that surrounded him. It is therefore a tale about the past, a narrative construction of a life and a piece of history, selected and organised for dramatic purposes. While considering this work within the frame of my own activity as a screenwriter and film director, and thus conditioned by these factors, it became necessary to ponder history as a system of interpretation and representation of the past, as well as its method and the varied narrative forms it can take. This was key for clarifying the perspective taken to approach the questions of history, memory and their forms of representation, in order to establish a dramatic sense of the past in the script. But these concerns are not neutral: narratives are also the result of the *conceptions of the world* they portray, and as such they can respond to different interests in sustaining hegemony and legitimating its social order or, on the contrary, fighting it. In this work, through the influence of the writings of Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, these very interests that narratives can represent became foundational to elaborating an alternative proposal in the fields of historical and biographical film practices. This was so because, on one hand, these practices have a massive effect in forming, moulding, manipulating and legitimating public historical thinking, and, on the other, because this research is mainly orientated towards intervening within them.

It is worth noticing first of all that as a discipline, history struggles to develop a method for studying the past. Though no definitive consensus has been achieved on the most accurate and precise model for doing so, certain grounds may be assumed for debating *what really happened*. However, history deals with a major obstacle regarding its very matter of study: the past has vanished. So what does history do to bring the past to the present? Represent it. Because even if the past is gone, it leaves traces. So history interprets these traces and represents them. Thus, the work of the historian is to track down and collect evidence, select the critical pieces and contrast different studies on the subject to design a pattern –that is, an order meant to represent the historian's statement about the study at hand.

As noted Cold War historian John William Gaddis asserts, the historian confronts these issues through a system of abstraction that serves for detachment and displacement from the subject under investigation, within a constant process of both shifting and making skilful conclusions. Humbly doubtful about these very conclusions, the historian must believe that in its representation something can

be contributed to the knowledge of the past, in its search for bigger patterns that might help to learn about the world and understand it better.[1] Recalling German philosopher and cultural critic Walter Benjamin's metaphorical reflection on history through Paul Klee's painting *Angelus Novus*,[2] Gaddis suggests that the task of historians is to "advance bravely into the future with our eyes fixed firmly on the past"[3] in order

> "to interpret the past for the purposes of the present with a view to managing the future, ... without suspending the capacity to assess the particular circumstances in which one might have to act, or the relevance of past actions on them".[4]

Thus, we could argue that, while the historian's activity takes place in the present, in this "unending dialogue between the present and the past" as historian E. H. Carr called it,[5] two unachievable times are part of its duties: the past, as the lost matter of study, but also the future, as a time yet to come that might be enlightened by the understanding of the past. Operating under the optimistic notion that knowledge of past events can serve to cope with the uncertainties of the future, history articulates both unattainable times through its practice in the present, within the constancy of the *everlasting now* or *nunc stans*. Or, as Benjamin suggested, "History is the subject of a structure whose site is ... filled with the presence of the now".[6]

By unveiling the uncertain knowledge of what the world and our kind have gone through, history does not help to magically predict the future, but it helps to be prepared for it. Thus, learning about the past does not automatically lead us to change whatever is yet to come, but knowing about past injustices can enlighten our empathic and ethical response to current forms of oppression and articulate our action towards them. As radical historian Howard Zinn asserts, by refusing to assume the tragic development of history as inevitable and acting *as if* we can actually shift its course, we are capable of figuring out alternative ways to approach the conflicts with which history keeps challenging us.

Nevertheless, while historical knowledge is a common ambition for addressing the future, the aim of learning about the past to understand better the world we live in is not exclusive to historians. In his *Poetics*, Aristotle expressed the core idea that art imitates life because mimesis is a natural instinct of humankind in order to learn the lessons of past experiences. For him, imitation in art appeared then as a vehicle for learning about the world, because "to learn gives the liveliest pleasure".[7]

1] Gaddis, John Lewis 2002, *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, p. 7.
2] Benjamin, Walter 1969, *Illuminations*, translated by Harry Zohn, New York: Schocken Books, pp. 257-258.
3] Gaddis, John Lewis 2002, p. 2.
4] Ibid., pp. 10-11.
5] Carr, E. H. 1987, *What is History?*, New York: Penguin, p. 86.
6] Benjamin, Walter 1969, p. 261. As noted by translator Harry Zohn, Benjamin uses the term *Jetztzeit*, which refers to *nunc stans* and not just the present (*Gegenwart*).
7] Aristotle 1998, *Poetics*, translated by S. H. Butcher, Ebook: Orange Street Press Classics, p. 8.

If we agree with Aristotle's statement linking the origin of drama to an instinctive call for learning about the world, we could conclude that discovering the world's mysteries is meant to "satisfy humankind's unending search for understanding".[8]

Thus, in the process of selecting data, interpreting it and designing patterns for representing it, historians, journalists, fiction and non-fiction writers and dramatists can find a shared field in narrative. From a constructivist perspective, cognitive psychologist Jerome Bruner studied widely how the human mind recalls experiences in narrative forms as a mechanism not just for representing reality, but also for constituting it too, as ""world making" is the principal function of mind".[9] Language and other "symbolic systems"[10] serve to structure and organise memory, selecting relevant events of life and shaping them in narrative terms. This helps to channel the emergent expression of the human mind. Thus, the narrative articulates human experience, so ""life" comes to imitate "art" and vice versa".[11] For Bruner, in their interpretation of reality, narratives can only attain verisimilitude, over the verifiability of factual or logical demands. Verisimilitude is then accepted by narrative conventions such as genres. Therefore, narrative expression "operates as an instrument of mind in the construction of reality",[12] an exceptional "mental model" of events over time. In this regard, the notion of *human time*, borrowed from French philosopher Paul Ricoeur's study on the reciprocity between time and narrative in articulating meaning,[13] is critical for Bruner's understanding of how sequences of events are presented narratively. As he discusses, both written and oral stories are just some of the many existing forms that the human mind uses to construct reality, shaping memory in both interpreting and representing the world around us.

Bruner's understanding of the human mind as a social realm, the importance he gives to narrative in the agreed-upon *world making* and the significance of memory in this process of coping with reality, brings him close to the reflections of Antonio Gramsci on the role the *conceptions of the world* play in the forging of hegemony, as well as in his explorations of memory as a collective and *intersubjective* entity, both fragmentary and contradictory. Thus, if we agree that narrative is key in conceiving of the world socially, we could then argue that there is a tight bond between narrative and the *conceptions of the world* we share, both to cope with reality and to struggle dialectically with others. As a central notion in Gramsci, hegemony appears as the capacity of one class to expand its *conception of the world* over other subaltern

8] Letwin, David; Stockdale, Joe and Stockdale, Robin 2008, *The Architecture of Drama*, Lanham, Toronto and Plymouth: The Scarecrow Press, p. XXIV.
9] Bruner, Jerome 2004, 'Life as Narrative', *Social Research*, 71, 3, p. 691.
10] Bruner, Jerome 1991, 'The Narrative Construction of Reality', *Critical Inquiry*, 18, p. 3. Bruner is here borrowing the notion from Soviet psychologist L. S. Vygotsky in *Thought and Language*.
11] Ibid., p. 21.
12] Ibid., 6.
13] See See Ricoeur, Paul 1984, *Time and Narrative, Volume 1*, translated by Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer, London: The University of Chicago Press, p. 52, and Ricoeur, Paul 1980, 'Narrative Time', *Critical Inquiry*, 7, 1, p. 169.
14] See Gramsci, Antonio 2000, *The Gramsci Reader. Selected Writings 1916-1935*, edited by David Forgacs, New York: New York University Press, pp. 360-362, and Gramsci, Antonio 1999, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, edited and translated by Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, London: ElecBook, pp. 626-630.

groups, turning its views into agreed-upon *common sense*.[14] The process of forming knowledge and taking it for granted –the production and reception of texts– is then seminal to expanding hegemony's interests. For Gramsci this supremacy is not achieved only politically or economically, but also in the cultural field, where he relates folklore to *common sense*. Thus, as the formation of *conceptions of the world* and their social transmission as knowledge is essential to this process, and the rigidity of official history as constructed by hegemony has traditionally marginalised the subaltern groups from it, for Gramsci the flexible and unstructured characteristics of memory seem essential to elaborating alternative narratives that can confront hegemonic ones. As the asymmetries between hegemony and the subaltern provoke a constant fight for gaining consensus around their different *conceptions of the world*, and as it is in the realm of culture where collective identities are formed and transformed, narrative is a crucial tool in this struggle.

Therefore, given their social and cultural impact as shared constructions of reality, we could claim that narratives are relevant forms in constituting our *conceptions of the world* and thus in forming what we agree upon as knowledge. Different narratives offer differing positions that compete in the process of *world making*, explaining the world by endorsing different interests. By fighting between them, these different narratives struggle for hegemony –that is, they contend for a wider consensus to become hegemonic in the realm of knowledge. We could argue that when these hegemonic narratives are socially accepted as knowledge, they become *commonsensical*.

For a study like this, inspired by the dramatic treatment of a real character like Rodolfo Walsh, essential to the narrative representation of the subaltern, the process by which different social stances develop their narratives to compete for a hegemonic position, forging an *intersubjective* and practical consensus around *truth*, is a central concern. And, as all these aspects were seminal for Walsh and his time –which is the historical matter of study on which the script was built–, and they are also key for the transformative proposal of this work in addressing generic forms like the biopic, the struggles of the subaltern groups in making their views visible and their voices audible became even more relevant throughout this research process.

Thus, as a fine mechanism for learning about the world –that *liveliest pleasure* we get from knowing about the experiences that took and take place–, narrative appears essential to our cultural development. As it plays a major role in our understanding of the world and our *world making*, and history is notably interpreted and represented through narrative forms, it is then key to examine the value of these forms in the forging of our historical thinking, as well as the techniques, tools and methods used for that purpose. And in this regard, the massive cognitive and communicative potential of cinema deserves special attention. Only by studying these aspects in depth will we be able to build alternative proposals to the hegemonic forms of historical and biographical representation in general and in film in particular in order to successfully channel the narratives of the subaltern and widely affect the established notions of history in the public scene.

Therefore, within this context, this study tries to cover a series of questions related to the historical representation of the subaltern and the usage of biographical

forms –such as the biopic–, with its limitations and obstacles, for counterhegemonic purposes. We then try to answer the question of whether alternative approaches to history can make use of hegemonic forms for representing the subaltern without being absorbed by hegemony. And in this regard, and within the particular case of filmmaking and the practice that motivates this study, can a hegemonic form like the biopic genre, characterised by explaining the complexities of history through the story of an individual and tending to mythologise him or her, be of any use for the historical narratives, needs and interests of the subaltern? And if so, considering how hegemonic forms serve to legitimate the established order, can the subaltern appropriate these very forms and transform them into something new capable of driving their *conceptions of the world* and demands? We will then, through the observation of other practices that have faced these inquiries before in the cultural field, try to define what strategies could be followed to succeed in this aim and thus elaborate a proposal for transforming the forms for that purpose.

PRAXIS AND DIALECTICS

In order to answer these questions and achieve the goals proposed, this study embraces two major methodological aspects, inherited to some degree from Gramsci's influence throughout the process. On one hand, it is through praxis that this research aims to prove its *validity*. Gramsci understood philosophy not just as a realm where a few professional intellectuals elaborate abstract ideas, but where critical reflection gets articulated according to existing forms of thought resulting from the material activities carried out in the world where we all participate. Thus, he called it *philosophy of praxis*, in which ideas get adapted to specific situations through *critico-practical activity.*[15] Therefore, as it is in practice that we provide meaning, produce knowledge and communicate it, serving as the grounds for its theoretical articulation, in this research the observation of previous cultural experiences is then the basis for developing an alternative plan of action. This plan is not a dogmatic or purely theoretical statement but instead a flexible and practical proposal for critically rethinking and re-elaborating the dominant forms of representation, particularly in the film field.

On the other hand, this study also endorses a dialectical method to cope with its practical goals. By dialectics we understand the confrontation of opposite material forces that compete for a hegemonic position, resulting in alternative forms of thought and practice. Within the realms of the social, these dialectical struggles between antagonists can produce new *conceptions of the world*, and thus narratives. While the hegemonic ones tend to legitimate the dominant social order, those from the subaltern groups cannot simply reject them or look aside if they aspire to succeed in their fight. By understanding the very characteristics of hegemonic

15] See Gramsci, Antonio 1999, pp. 624-625.

narratives and analysing what makes them both formulaic and successful, we are able to compete and provide alternative narratives and forms of representation, modifying conformist dominant attitudes and introducing critical ones. This dual tension between opposites, in dialogue through practice, offers new meanings to the way we understand the world. Dialectics appear then crucial for the development of a critical thinking that can sow the seeds for confronting and shifting the established forms by which we conceive of reality.

Therefore, throughout this research we observe a series of cultural practices that have explored the dialectical relationship between hegemony and the subaltern –as well as other opposites like historicity and the universal, specificity and the mythical or urgency and transcendence– in order to elaborate the theoretical framework for the proposal. It is through these analyses that we address the question of narrative transformation, with a special emphasis on the realm of genre, as agreed-upon conventions that serve both cognitive and communicative purposes. Considering the massive potential of films in this regard, we could argue that *generic transformations* can serve to alter the dominant narratives in society and, by extension, the way audiences construct their *conceptions of the world*.

Additionally, concerning the relevance of historical contexts in the developing of cultural practices and social events, historicism appears as another central aspect in the method of this study. This necessarily calls for the methodical specificity of these very practices under scrutiny –a must for developing an efficient critical tactic within a wider counterhegemonic strategy. And in this regard, we have to underscore the relevance of the notion of commitment to this process, which forms the basis of the political aspects of the proposal. Thus, by attending to the question of the subaltern as historical subject, ethics occupy an important space in the exploration of its possible representations. As it is through practice that we provide meaning to *the real* and produce knowledge, we must trust in our capabilities to elaborate alternative narratives that can introduce the subaltern's *conceptions of the world* in the dialectical struggle for knowledge. It is then impossible to avoid the political commitment of this research in proposing the subversion of dominant narratives as part of a wider political agenda, in harmony with other expressions meant for social change. Through commitment, *truth-claims* get validated in practice and consequently practical knowledge gets produced. Elaborating and communicating alternative narratives can serve the purpose of confronting the hegemonic positions and subverting the established conformist *conceptions of the world*.

To conclude, this study aims at providing a useful framework for developing counterhegemonic narratives, mainly in the film field. We approach this by endorsing the goals of *generic transformation*, proposing at the end of this study the label of the *testimonial biopic* as a possible type of it. Nevertheless, this label does not intend to apply to any other practice but the one carried out throughout the script *They Call Me Rodolfo Walsh*. This results from a critical analysis of Latin American testimonial literature, Third Cinema and other expressions of counterhegemonic culture, and by giving thorough attention to the contributions that these practices provide to rethinking the representation of history and biography from the perspec-

Rodolfo Walsh.

tive of the subaltern. The critical observation of these practices, initially stimulated by the screenwriting process, is what inspires the reflections in this research work in seeking ground-breaking forms and methods for dealing with these very issues. In this regard, the study makes a special effort to raise consciousness on the importance of the central character of the script, Rodolfo Walsh, as he contributed to generating alternative forms of historical representation and transformed the established literary genres for that purpose. It is partly due to this tribute that the proposal underscores the importance of the term *testimonial* in its name. Thus, through the exploration of cultural practices that have confronted the formulas and limitations of historical representations and subjects, and thanks to the knowledge gained during the elaboration of the script *They Call Me Rodolfo Walsh*, this study attempts to develop a plan of action to cope with these vast challenges.

STRUCTURE

The research is presented in two parts. The first is dedicated to a series of inquiries, obstacles and demands related to the realm of interpretation and representation of history and memory in general, with a particular focus on how these have been managed in the film field. This part also includes the main notions that serve as the foundation upon which the study is built. The second part is dedicated to cultural practices and interventions that have proposed alternative ways to manage those

very questions and difficulties in their elaboration and re-elaboration of counter-hegemonic forms of representation, transcending the generally accepted boundaries of dominant narratives. This part focuses on the emergence and experiences of Latin American testimonial literature or *testimonio* and Third Cinema, and it also conducts an analysis of Spike Lee's film *Malcolm X* (1992). The study aims to explore their contributions to the cultural expression of the subaltern sectors, in order to inspire those movements seeking alternative historical and biographical representations today within a tradition of dialectical practice and theory. For this purpose, the chapters take relevant study cases that serve to exemplify similar goals. Also through them, we introduce Rodolfo Walsh and his connection to the central themes of the study, tracing links between his figure and the aims of this proposal.

The reason for choosing these cases contains both practical and historicist grounds. In practical terms, these fields cover both literary and filmic practices. Thus, the combination of them seems key for a proposal like this one, mainly based on the experience of screenwriting, as a script is a dramaturgical form related to both writing and cinema. In historicist terms, the two Latin American cultural practices under study are directly connected to the life and work of Walsh, as he was arguably the father of *testimonio* and the notion of Third Cinema shared the same cultural and political context with him. On the other hand, Lee's film is analysed as an intervention by the subaltern into the field of hegemonic biographical film representation. It appears then as a successful example to aid us in dealing with some of the practical problems regarding the transformation of the biopic genre according to the needs of the subaltern. We could also add that, due to the meaning of a historical subject such as Malcolm X and the links we could trace between his organic intellectual and political activities and those of Walsh, Lee's work seems like an important work to reflect upon when viewing the project as a cohesive whole. This is so because it tackles similar issues to those faced in *They Call Me Rodolfo Walsh* through the use of narrative conventions of a dominant film genre like the biopic, transforming it dialectically for the benefit of historically marginalised groups.

Chapter 1 deals with the realm of historical interpretation and representation. It introduces a series of Gramsci's notions on historicism, *common sense* and *good sense*, consensus, the role of intellectuals in forging *conceptions of the world* and the *intersubjective* value of these. All of these aspects are central to establishing the framework of the research. By studying this in relation to the different approaches and debates on the links between history and narrative, we explore how systems of representation contribute to the formation of agreed-upon knowledge and the constitution and legitimisation of hegemony. We also attend to the relevance of narrative in organising our memory, and thus its importance for developing alternatives to the rigidity of official history, as exposed by Walter Benjamin and Gramsci. We also underscore the ethical problems behind the plain relativism of historical knowledge in connection to its practical use. And through Benjamin and Gramsci again, we look at the shifting of the historical subject and the emergence of the subaltern as protagonist of an alternative view of history, which necessarily

affects the way we deal with narrative. The last part of the chapter is dedicated to the reflections of Howard Zinn regarding the possibilities of history to incite active commitment to social change and the inhibiting dangers of any attempt of neutrality or pretended objectivity in its practice –a position we link to Walsh's on the matter.

Chapter 2 deals with the fields of historical and biographical films, as well as their role and massive potential in affecting public historical thinking, in relation to historiographical and biographical literature. Thus, we explore the cognitive and communicative values of genres, as shared conventions of content key in the production and reception of texts, and their significance within the homogenising development of what the Frankfurt School called the *culture industries*, especially within the hegemonic Hollywood model. Regarding the historical film, and through the contributions of authors like Marcia Landy or Robert Rosenstone, among others, we study its relevance in the forging of public history and the characteristics connecting it to Gramsci's *common sense* as folklore. We also attend to its problematic capacity to alienate the critical thought of spectators while demystifying the *aura* of the arts at the same time, in connection with the classical debate on cinema between Benjamin and German philosopher Theodor Adorno. We then study the areas of invention, accuracy and verisimilitude in historical films as important elements of these debates, paying special attention to the combination of generic and cultural verisimilitude in this form of cinema. We also explore the conflictive essence of the biopic as a historical representation that explains complex historical processes through individual lives or achievements. But we also explore the possibilities of this genre to look at lives as *historical allegories* that might open history to the rethinking of the past for future generations. We then observe, through the seminal work of professor George Custen in the field, inspired by sociologist Leo Löwenthal and philosopher Roland Barthes, how and why the biopic became a hegemonic form for the Hollywood model of the studio era before the 60's, producing myths that legitimated the *commonsensical* way of life. At the end of the chapter we study the development of the genre up to the present day through the key work of professor Dennis Bingham, to see how the boundaries of it have been tested by representing marginalised figures from subaltern groups, thus questioning our narratives of history and its protagonists.

Chapter 3 deals with the context, emergence and characteristics of Latin American testimonial literature as a narrative of the subaltern. It examines Gramsci's notions of the national-popular and his thoughts on the *language question*, as well as the influence of his work on psychiatrist Frantz Fanon's reflections about colonialism and culture. This first part of the chapter is crucial for framing the historical and cultural characteristics of *testimonio*, but it also lays the groundwork for dealing with Third Cinema, studied in Chapter 4. Similarly, a brief introduction to the social and political environment of the epoch in Latin America, the relevance of Cuba during the Cold War and the exploration of the *organic intellectual* through Gramsci's contributions will help to contextualise both practices as well. Additionally, the chapter uses Argentine literary scholar Claudia Gilman's work on the development of Latin American writers and intellectuals in connection with the

Literary Boom of the 60's and 70's, to explore in depth the influence of Che Guevara, the modernisation of the publishing industry and the dilemmas over realism and cultural and military avant-gardism in the field, mirroring previous debates on the literary form between cultural critic Georg Lukács, playwright Bertolt Brecht and Benjamin. By studying the shifts that were occurring in these areas, we are able to explain the emergence and institutionalisation of testimonial literature as a committed political response to the challenge of literary forms at the time. We then look at the characteristics of this transformative genre and its influence on the Latin American cinema. The chapter closes with a brief study of Rodolfo Walsh, as the author of a work considered to be the precursor of *testimonio* with *Operation Massacre* (*Operación Masacre*) in 1957 and an active participant in the debates of his time. We attend to his contributions to shifting attention towards the subaltern sectors, his organic commitment as intellectual and militant, his view of history as an open-ended stage for struggle, the relevance of popular memory in his work and other aspects that relate him to Gramsci, Brecht and Benjamin in questioning official *truth-claims* and exploring alternative ways for representation and communication. All these features provide relevant background for his contributions to the transformation of both literature and journalism.

Chapter 4 deals with Third Cinema as a cultural revolutionary praxis. It first discusses the main characteristics of the so-called New Latin American Cinema, the wave Third Cinema belonged to, that are notably similar to those we studied in its literary counterpart. We explore the major film and theoretical lineages of the movement, as well as its political context and aims. The chapter then studies the original emergence of the notion of Third Cinema, as developed by Argentine filmmakers Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino in the manifesto *Towards a Third Cinema*, which followed their seminal film *The Hour of the Furnaces* (*La Hora de los Hornos,* 1968). By studying its complexity through their insights, as well as through other essential contributions from film theorists like Michael Chanan, we also explore the major influences of Fanon, Brecht, Benjamin and Gramsci on Solanas and Getino's work and plan of action, as well as the political context that surrounded them and its link to Walsh. Through the methodical research of Argentine media scholar Mariano Mestman, we then explore the expansion of the notion within the Third World context and a series of seminal events connected to it. We also look at the reformulation that the notion went through thanks to the work of professor Teshome Gabriel in the 80's and 90's. This helps us to explore how the development of subaltern studies in the UK favoured the rethinking of the term through film theorist Paul Willemen's reflections during the Third Cinema Conference in Edinburgh in 1986. The last part of the chapter is dedicated to the Marxist approach of British film and media scholar Mike Wayne to Third Cinema and his re-evaluation of its contributions to the current cultural revolutionary praxis seeking for change. In this regard, we also analyse in depth Cuban filmmaker Tomás Gutiérrez Alea's insights into aesthetics and the politics of revolutionary cinema through the dialectical confrontation of Brecht on one hand and Aristotle and Eisenstein on the other, as a foundational aspect for developing what Wayne proposes as *generic*

transformation. We then relate this notion to Gabriel's and Chanan's contributions and suggest it as key to subverting the biopic genre in the interests of the subaltern.

Chapter 5 analyses Spike Lee's *Malcolm X* as a fine example of a work that challenges the boundaries of the biopic genre. We examine Lee's film to underscore its thorough use of the formulas of a hegemonic genre in order to introduce a radical intellectual and his thought to a wider audience, providing massive resonance to a traditionally marginalised voice. By doing this and appropriating the features of the genre, Lee elaborates upon a *historical allegory* that intervenes in public historical thinking, both affecting audiences used to mainstream formulaic representations of history and provoking them to question contemporary harsh issues of US race politics. By framing his *historytelling* within the tension of *two times*, immediacy and transcendence, we interrogate how Lee's contribution might serve to explore the possibilities of using the massive potential of film for the counterhegemonic purposes of disseminating subaltern narratives.

We then close the study with general conclusions, attempting to respond to the major questions elaborated by it. We also introduce and define the term suggested for a *generic transformation* of the biopic genre: the *testimonial biopic*. The label is inspired by an analysis of these practices, but aims to refer solely to the work developed through the script *They Call Me Rodolfo Walsh* and its potential transformation into a film. As this film does not exist yet, the usage of the term in this study is more reflexive and suggestive than empirical. By reflecting on it, this research does not intend to suggest it as a formula that should apply to the works of others, such as Lee's *Malcolm X*, nor offer schematic recipes of *how to make a testimonial biopic*. Actually, the reflections exposed here regarding the label do not deal with questions of aesthetics or style, as these surpass the realm of this study, especially because no actual film can be offered to validate statements regarding those fields. Instead we focus on other methodological aspects of the proposal, particularly on those that, stimulated by the critical observation of the other counterhegemonic practices, can offer a view on the different levels of commitment demanded in a plan of action for dealing with similar topics and goals.

Finally, separated from the rest of the study, we include two appendices to introduce the research and writing process of the script *They Call Me Rodolfo Walsh* and its dramatic structure, as well as a list of the most relevant references used in it and a scene from the script to exemplify how the dramatic work was developed. As we explain in the first appendix, unfortunately we are not able to include the whole script here due to its extensive length, the impossibility of considering it in its final stages until it has been shot and edited, and the risks that publishing it might cause to its potential production.

PART 1

HISTORYTELLING AND CINEMA

"It is time to end their careers of violence. The world is watching them. This is their opportunity to ... choose the right side of history".

Anders Fogh Rasmussen, *Statement by the NATO Secretary General on the Situation in Libya*

"Our dominant classes have always tried to assure that the workers don't have history, don't have doctrine, don't have heroes nor martyrs. Every struggle must start from scratch, separated from previous struggles: the collective experience gets lost, the lessons are forgotten. History appears then as private property, whose owners are the owners of every other thing".

Rodolfo Walsh, *El Cordobazo*

CHAPTER 1

ON 'THE RIGHT SIDE OF HISTORY'

History can be described as a combination of interpretation and representation. These processes are always interlaced, working dialectically in both directions. As a representational tool, the historical narrative not only selects the events it depicts and chooses appropriate data to support its storyline, but also frames the information from a particular perspective –the one of the narrator, who provides meaning. It could be argued then that these conditions form the basis of historical interpretative criteria.

To narrate history is to interpret the past, the sources and the data, from the research phase to the moment a pattern emerges and gives an order to the *story*,

enlightening everything with meaning. As Bruner suggests, narrating is a way of interpreting the world, comprehending and processing it as knowledge.[16] In this regard, the role of the narrator –the subjectivity of decisions taken throughout the whole process, the focus on one subject over another, the point of view – is key for understanding how the narrative of the past affects our historical thinking. The interpretation of history is indissoluble from its narrative *emplotment*.

It is necessary to ponder the realm of historical interpretation and narrative in order to explore how cultural practices have interrogated its forms of representation, as in the cases of the historical film, the biopic genre, Third Cinema and Latin American testimonial literature. As some members of the Frankfurt School rightly underlined, interpreting history is not only a question of empirical practices, but a matter of moral choices and ideological motivations too. Thus, *making history* also means *taking sides*.

This chapter tackles a series of inquiries into the realm of interpretation and representation in history, questioning aspects related to the hegemonic formation of official history for narrating the collective past. Collective memory, as the manifestation of popular *intersubjectivity*, appears as a relevant device for confronting reductive aspects of the official historical narratives. The figure of Antonio Gramsci is central to this topic, as his reflections on history, popular philosophy and *common sense* are key to understanding how knowledge is formed by consensus and coercion, becoming a fruitful field for the dialectical struggle between hegemonic and subaltern groups.

Gramsci offers an integral model of historical interpretation that serves to question how knowledge is constructed and moulded, serving to form hegemony. As a central notion in his work, hegemony refers to the supremacy of one class, due to its capacity to expand its *conceptions of the world* over the subordinated ones –the subaltern. By doing this, the hegemonic group makes the subaltern embrace these conceptions as their own, endorsing the interests of hegemony over which these very conceptions are founded. Therefore, through coercion and mainly consensus, the hegemonic *conceptions of the world* become *commonsensical*. And thus, dominant constructions of reality –like narratives– turn into socially agreed-upon knowledge, naturalised as taken for granted. It is necessary to explore a series of Gramscian notions that help to expose how, by providing meaning to past events, the role of interpretation is key to generating knowledge. Knowledge is then a form of shared consensus or *intersubjective* agreement that becomes collectively understood as *truth*. Intellectuals –referring to those that are socially designated to carry out the intellectual activity of society– play an important role in this process, and such is the case of both historians and narrators. These aspects are essential for addressing other questions relevant to this research such as the identity of subaltern groups in relation to hegemony, as well as the national and popular or the

16] See Bruner, Jerome 1991, 'The Narrative Construction of Reality', *Critical Inquiry*, 18, pp. 1-21, and Bruner, Jerome 2004, 'Life as Narrative', *Social Research*, 71, 3, pp. 691-710.

commonsensical orientation of culture as folklore, which will appear in subsequent chapters in connection to the artistic practices under scrutiny.

Traditional historiography and its relationship to the configuration of knowledge and power has been debated for a long time. Authors like Karl Marx and Friedrich Nietzsche in the 19th century, and others as significant as Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno and Michel Foucault in the 20th, have dealt with this issue. For the purpose of this research, others like Frantz Fanon, C. L. R. James, Edward Said, Paulo Freire, Eduardo Galeano, Howard Zinn and Stuart Hall, just to name a few, have focused their studies on this topic from the perspective of the subaltern, and have shared certain areas of interest with or have been influenced to varying degrees by Gramsci. Their works problematise the question of both subject and subjectivity, addressing the ideological aspects related to both realms, and questioning the claims of objectivity and the neutrality of the narrator's voice in traditional discourses, and their monopoly on the historical narrative.

Other aspects present in this chapter have to do with the relativism of history as a discipline and its possibilities for achieving *accurate* knowledge in interpreting historical events. In connection with this, another topic discussed here is the subject of history as treated in Benjamin's reflections on historical materialism, as influenced by the Marxian dialectic oppressor-versus-oppressed binary, even if an exploration of the hegemony-subaltern binary reveals that it possesses a more complex relationship than that of the oppressor-oppressed. In this regard, the texts of radical historian Howard Zinn will serve to reflect on these inquiries from the perspective of moral judgement and praxis in order to trace certain parallelisms with Walsh's views on neutrality and objectivity, interrogating the possibilities of historical knowledge and activating the observer's place in the world.

Framing the interpretative aspects of *historytelling* is of great significance in order to explore the contributions and reflections on history and memory of the Latin American testimonial literature and Third Cinema in subsequent chapters, as cultural practices of major influence on the proposal put forward by this study.

GRAMSCI'S HISTORICISM: ON HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY

Gramsci's emphasis on historicism –the notion that the specificity of history plays a defining role in the outcome of events– could be regarded as a call to raise awareness about the significant role of interpretation, assigning an essential relevance to the specificity of context and the local, and rejecting other types of universal approaches. In his view, all meaning is the result of the link between the praxis of human activity and the social and historical environment where it takes place. For Gramsci, the knowledge that facilitates our understanding of the world is actively formed by the practical use of those notions that constitute knowledge itself within the social relationships at play. The realm of historical interpretation serves to provide meaning to historical events, leading to the formation of knowledge by social consensus. Knowledge then is a shared, collective and *intersubjective* agreement.

Fields like philosophy or science –and history– are not isolated from those who produce them. Instead, they acquire the social significance of *truth* as a reflection of the social context and practice from which they spring.

The approach of Gramsci to history is particularly sensitive to the popular, the collective and the practical use of this field of knowledge, which he links directly to philosophy.[17] His contribution is of great importance because it sought to describe an epistemology of collective agreement applied to knowledge. Thus he underscored the relevance of the dialectical struggle between different collectives in the forging of knowledge, for the purpose of achieving or defeating hegemony. Gramsci noted, in connection to the popular and the formation of consensus, an indivisible relationship between history and philosophy –understood as a *conception of the world* that sustains our practical activity. He then focused on the normative and practical functions –"norm[s] of life ... as being carried out in practical life"[18]– of both realms.

Gramsci argued that studying only the contributions of those socially assigned or professionally dedicated to these fields was not sufficient to understanding the *conception of the world* of a certain epoch. Thus he broke away from the grand narrative view of history to emphasise the dynamic dialectical relationship between the different collectives that take part in it. When referring to the history of philosophy as different *conceptions of the world* in dispute throughout time, he warned:

> "attention should be drawn ... to the conceptions of the world held by the great masses, to those of the most restricted ruling (or intellectual) groups, and finally to the links between these various cultural complexes and the philosophy of the philosophers. The philosophy of an age ... is a process of combination of all these elements, which culminates in an overall trend, in which the culmination becomes a norm of collective action and becomes concrete and complete (integral) "history"".[19]

Gramsci proposed a practical and unifying view of history and philosophy –which together, in every specific social formation, formed what he called a *historical bloc*, as a unity of base and superstructure, of thought and historical action. And as both history and philosophy are part of the mechanisms involved in the forging of a collective consensus around knowledge, they also play a key role in the constitution of hegemony:

> "The philosophy of an historical epoch is, therefore, nothing other than the "history" of that epoch itself, nothing other than the mass ofvariations that

17] See Gramsci, Antonio 2000, *The Gramsci Reader. Selected Writings 1916-1935*, edited by David Forgacs, New York: New York University Press, pp. 324-326.

18] Gramsci, Antonio 1999, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, edited and translated by Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, London: ElecBook, pp. 657-658. Gramsci borrows this notion from Benedetto Croce's definition of religion.

19] Ibid., p. 658.

> the leading group has succeeded in imposing onpreceding reality. History and philosophy are in this sense indivisible: they form a bloc".[20]

For Gramsci historical knowledge –what we understand as *what we know* about the past– appears as a configuration of dynamic, varied, fragmented and often contradictory influences. Thus, collective identification is an important feature in the conflictive relationship between hegemony and the subaltern.

ORGANISING OUR EXPERIENCES THROUGH NARRATIVE

As suggested by Gramsci, in the flexible and fragmentary formation of *conceptions of the world* competing for hegemony, the accumulation of agreed-upon knowledge from past experiences is key for cultural development. Learning about the past to understand the world is the basis for that process, and through it some groups impose their views on others, making them subaltern. How that knowledge is shaped, represented and transmitted, as well as how it becomes hegemonic, is part of the constitution of culture. In this regard, if history is something that we communicate through narrative, narrative also serves to interpret, represent and transform history into knowledge. We could then ponder whether in the building of historical narratives, and in the forging of consensus around them as *true* interpretations and representations of the past, we are not indeed aiming to achieve some sort of social hegemony, particularly over other alternative interpretations and representations of the shared past. The question of narrative has been central to the debates on historical studies and the philosophy of history during the last decades, and it is not arbitrary that narrative is such a crucial issue for both storytelling and *historytelling*.

For Gaddis, the work of the historian is to track down the traces left by the past, collect pieces of evidence, select them according to a methodology, contrast the different studies on them and design a pattern, an order to represent them, constantly shifting and making skillful conclusions. The patterns designed by the historian are potentially useful to understanding reality and learning about the world.[21] And paraphrasing Aristotle, the "liveliest pleasure" of learning about the world is essential for our cultural development. E. H. Carr reflected on how, even if the human brain has probably remained the same size for thousands of years, our living standards have been modified vastly throughout all that time, proving how our cultural development depends a lot more on learning about the past than on the slow biological changes that our kind experiences. "History is progress through the transmission of acquired skills from one generation to another", he asserted.[22] In similar terms, Gaddis proposes history as

20] Ibid., pp. 658-659.
21] Gaddis, John Lewis 2002, *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 8-11.
22] Carr, E. H. 1987, *What is History?*, New York: Penguin, p. 114.

> "the best method of enlarging experience in such a way as to command the widest possible consensus on what the significance of the experience might be".[23]

Consensus appears again, as in Gramsci's work, as a central notion. Interpreting the past and representing it is then part of this risky business of learning about our past experiences and projecting that knowledge onto the challenges yet to come. And thus, alterative views that face those established as definitive and absolute are necessary for our cultural development. As "abstractionists" –Gaddis' term– historians need a system of representation that allows them to rearrange reality and serve their goals, bounding disconnected events in time and space.[24] Historian Hayden White has noted that paradoxically this system often falls into three act structures.[25] Gaddis suggests that the form of abstraction that serves to channel these demands is the narrative, which as a "rhetorical device"[27] takes the form of historiography in written history.

In terms that might recall Aristotle's reflections on the role of actions in drama in his *Poetics*, some authors like social theorist W. B. Gallie or historian Richard G. Ely focused on the link between historical narratives and human action,[28] a selective process in which the historian shares much ground with the dramatist. In this sense, on what he called "dialectic of action", philosopher Frederick A. Olafson went as far as to suggest that

> "historical narrative is ... the reconstruction of a sequence of human actions within which one action and its consequences become the premise for a succeeding action and so on".[29]

Philosopher of history Louis O. Mink took a cognitive stand on the matter to define narrative as a "mode of comprehension" for understanding history as a unity. For

23] Gaddis, John Lewis 2002, p. 9.
24] Ibid., p. 20.
25] White, Hayden 1973, *Metahistory*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, p. 5.
26] Gaddis, John Lewis 2002, p. 15.
27] The phrase is taken from Stone, Lawrence 1979, 'The Revival of Narrative: Reflections on a New Old History', *Past and Present*, 85, pp. 3-24. Stone detected a shift in "new historians", returning to the narrative as the proper vehicle for their practice to organise "material in a chronologically sequential order ... focusing of the content into a single coherent story, albeit with sub-plots". Comparing "narrative history" to "structural history", Stone warned: "The trouble is ... that argument by selective example is philosophically unpersuasive, a rhetorical device not a scientific proof". Stone's affirmations were contested soon after by historian Eric Hobsbawm, who recognised that "some historians have shifted from "circumstances" to "men" (including women), or have discovered that a simple base/superstructure model and economic history are not enough ... Some may well have convinced themselves that there is an incompatibility between their "scientific" and "literary" functions". Nevertheless, he asserted that "it is not necessary to analyse the present fashions in history entirely as a rejection of the past, and in so far as they cannot be entirely analysed in such terms, it will not do". Hobsbawm, Eric 1980, 'The Revival of Narrative: Some Comments', *Past and Present*, 86, pp. 3–8.
28] See Gallie, W. B., 'Narrative and Historical Understanding', and Ely, Richard G., 'Mandelbaum on Historical Narrative: a Discussion', in Roberts, Geoffrey (ed.) 2001, *The History and Narrative Reader*, New York: Routledge, pp. 40-51 and 59-67.
29] Quoted in Roberts, Geoffrey, 'Introduction: The History and Narrative Debate, 1960-2000', in Roberts, Geoffrey (ed.) 2001, p. 5. See also Olafson, Frederick A., 'The dialectic of Action', in Roberts, Geoffrey (ed.) 2001, pp. 71-106.

Mink, it is through both "history and fiction that we learn how to tell and to understand *complex* stories", and also how "stories answer questions".[30] Thus, narrative appears as a historiographical form that organises, in its own structure, "the statement of the evidence" that answers specific historical questions. White would take this position even further to assert that the narrative nature of historiography is closer to its fictive literary counterparts than to science. The plot structure chosen by the historian then appears as the ground over which verbal fiction constructs historical narrative.[31] Philosopher Noël Carroll, on the other hand, replied to these views to underscore that even if historians *invent* narratives, that is far from making them up in the fictive sense, suggesting that *emplotment* has a lot more in common with life itself than with literary mechanisms. Carroll criticises White's assumption that narrative is solely fictional, and saw this reductive view on narrative as

> "a desperate and inevitably self-defeating way in which to grant the literary dimension of historiography its due".[32]

Carroll takes a similar position to that of philosopher David Carr, who proposed that history embraces narrative as the most efficient way to transmit knowledge about the human action in time, even if that does not make these narratives necessarily *true*. Instead, their *truth* as historical records is established by the *intersubjectivity* of historians, as a community with a scholarly tradition that serves to validate the statements of these narratives.[33]

In this regard, Jerome Bruner asserts that "we organize our experience and our memory of human happenings mainly in the form of narrative".[34] Narrative does not simply consist of choosing events and adjusting them to a particular pattern. The selective process of narrating is also a mechanism to provide meaning to these events and interpret them. Narrative is a "rhetorical device" that takes the form of historiography in written history. As E. H. Carr underlines the role of historians in providing meaning to the evidence,[35] Bruner also argues that

> "[t]he events themselves need to be constituted in the light of the overall narrative –... to be made "functions" of the story".[36]

30] Mink, Louis O. 1970, 'History and Fiction as Modes of Comprehension', *New Literary History*, 1, 3, p. 558.
31] See White, Hayden 1980, 'The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality', *Critical Inquiry*, 7, 1, pp. 5-27, White, Hayden, 'The Historical Text as Literary Artifact', in Roberts, Geoffrey (ed.) 2001, pp. 221-236, or White, Hayden 1973.
32] Carroll, Noël, 'Interpretation, History and Narrative', in Roberts, Geoffrey (ed.) 2001, p. 262.
33] See Carr, David, 'Getting the Story Straight: Narrative and Historical Knowledge', in Roberts, Geoffrey (ed.) 2001, pp. 197-208.
34] Bruner, Jerome 1991, p. 6.
35] Carr claims that "facts of history cannot be purely objective" and they only become as such "in virtue of the significance attached to them by the historian" by applying "the right standard of significance". Carr, E. H. 1987, pp. 120-123.
36] Bruner, Jerome 1991, p. 8. Bruner borrows the phrase ""functions" of the story" from Soviet folklorist Vladimir Propp.

As Gaddis argues, the narrative allows historians to portray events in time and space, maintaining "the tension between the literal and the abstract".[37] But the historian does not simply observe the events of the past, select the facts and interpret them. He also develops conclusions following the appropriate standards for verification, and abstracts data through a provisional *tale of the past* –a narrative that forges and transmits knowledge affecting our historical thinking. As the production of narratives and their reception go hand in hand with the communicative and cognitive processes that transform them into knowledge, there is another degree of the *intersubjective* relationship between historian and the public to be considered in the formation of our collective historical thinking. As Bruner asserts:

> "The telling of a story and its comprehension as a story depend on the human capacity to process knowledge in this interpretive way ... narrative comprehension is among the earliest powers of mind in the young child and among the most widely used forms of organizing human experience".[38]

Considering narrative as an inherent aspect of the human mind, Bruner observes that there is a type of "deep structure" between those telling the story and those receiving it that helps to connect and normalise the understanding:

> "The central concern is not how narrative as text is constructed, but rather how it operates as an instrument of mind in the construction of reality".[39]

Bruner argues for a dynamic, multi-layered and relational view between the transmission, reception and interpretation of narratives. Context, intention and background knowledge affect both the way narratives are interpreted and those negotiating their interpretation.[40] We can ponder the similarities between Bruner's proposal and Gramsci's emphasis on historicism, as both argue for the forging of knowledge in connection to the interlaced and dialectical relationship between the different agents involved in the process, as defined by their interests and local context.

Regarding the emphasis on the interpretative call of historicism, it might be beneficial to also consider the contributions of American cultural critic Fredric Jameson, who spoke about the importance of interpreting the literary narrative opening one of his key texts with the motto "Always historicize!"[41] For Jameson, historicising a narrative means to interpret it as a "socially symbolic act", which ultimately serves to develop a global understanding. For this reason, Jameson defends what he calls

37] Gaddis, John Lewis 2002, p. 15.
38] Bruner, Jerome 1991, p. 8.
39] Ibid., p. 6.
40] Ibid., pp. 10-11.
41] Jameson, Fredric 1981, *The Political Unconscious. Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act,* London and New York: Routledge, p. IX.

"political interpretation" as the most integral and historical form of interpretation.[42] Jameson states that

> "history is not a text, not a narrative, master or otherwise, [but] as an absent cause, it is inaccessible to us except in textual form, ... our approach to it and to the Real itself necessarily passes through its prior textualization, its narrativization in the political unconscious".[43]

Jameson sees in the "political unconscious" the need of the human mind to represent through narrative, which he describes –in terms similar to Bruner's– "as the central function or instance of the human mind".[44] For him the dialectic form of Marxism –between fragmenting and totalising, between the local and the universal– is the genuine philosophy that recognises the primacy of history to integrally respect

> "the specificity and radical difference of the social and cultural past while disclosing the solidarity of its polemics and passions, its forms, structures, experiences, and struggles, with those of the present day".[45]

FROM *COMMON SENSE* TO *GOOD SENSE*: THE ROLE OF THE INTELLECTUAL

As part of the process of collective consensus that creates knowledge, interpretation is an aspect present in Gramsci's reflections on *common sense*.[46] This is implicit when referring to the construction of narratives as interpretative forms for understanding the world. And it is particularly relevant when facing and seeking to understand the dominant forms of official history.

Gramsci's work is noteworthy, among other things, for breaking with certain orthodox Marxian positions regarding base and superstructure, expanding the dialectical relationship between the two by introducing the idea that superstructure is composed both by political and civil society. While the first is the organised force of society ruling through coercion, the second works in creating consensus to support hegemony. That is the space where intellectuals operate. In a famous passage of his *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci states that every man is an intellectual,

42] Ibid., p. 1.
43] Ibid., p. 20. Jameson states this while debating on Althusser's criticism of "master narratives" of history – "History is a process without a telos or a subject"– and its influence on other anti-interpretative trends and authors, like Gilles Deleuze.
44] Ibid., p. XIII.
45] Ibid., p. 2.
46] Peter D. Thomas notes that there is not a full correspondence between the Italian term *senso comune* and its English translation *common sense*, as "[w]hereas 'common sense' can include pejorative connotations, its usual meaning in English is a certain agility and capacity to act successfully in individual terms, once a subject has understood the 'rules of the game' of their given culture; *senso comune* in Italian, on the other hand, in both Gramsci's time and today, places a much stronger emphasis upon those elements that are 'common' i.e. a subject's integration into an existing system of cultural reference and meaning, tending to devalorise processes of individuation and often with a negative connotation". Thomas, Peter D. 2009, *The Gramscian Moment. Philosophy, Hegemony and Marxism*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, p. 16. On *common sense*, see Gramsci, Antonio 1999, pp. 630-656, and Gramsci, Antonio 2000, pp. 347-349.

because every man uses his intellect for all human activities. Nonetheless, not every man has the social function of being considered an intellectual, as the relationship of intellectuals –like religious leaders, philosophers, scientists, historians, writers, etc.– with the system of production is not as defined by their practice as it is in other social sectors. Intellectuals develop their activities as civil servants of the superstructure, within the ideological sectors of society, creating consensus, empowering social and political hegemony, securing, administrating and divulging the accumulated richness of intellectual traditions.[47] Therefore, intellectuals are those figures who bring to the table the very notions that serve for social debate and discussion, which through social consensus end up forming our thinking and knowledge.

Both political and civil society are aware of the values of the base –the material interests that rule social relationships– and participate in establishing those values in the society. Gramsci uses the term *common sense* to refer to the unstructured and spontaneous values and beliefs of the mass formed by consensus and/or coercion in a specific society. Regarding the "fragmentary, incoherent and inconsequential"[48] characteristics of *common sense*, Gramsci states that

> "common sense is not something rigid and immobile, but is continually transforming itself, enriching itself with scientific ideas and philosophical opinions which have entered ordinary life".[49]

Nevertheless, *common sense* is conformist as it is related uncritically with beliefs, assumptions and superstitions. It appears in culture as folklore. But *common sense* also contains the key for an alternative view of the world in the form of *good sense*. Therefore, the popular *common sense*, which naturalises and universalises values coming from partial interests based on the idea that *things have always been like this*, is also essential for the transition to a new ideology and culture –a social change that can be developed through *good sense*. A weapon that can operate for counter-hegemonic purposes is encapsulated in this *good sense*, as part of historical and dialectical materialism. Thus *common sense* is essential for social control and political hegemony due to its capacity to accommodate social and political thought accordingly. But for Gramsci, the role of the intellectual –both the *traditional* and the *organic intellectual*– is to operate within the contradictions of *common sense* and to develop a new *common sense*, a new frame of culture and ideology, beliefs and values: the *good sense*. These aspects serve to interrogate the responsibility of intellectuals and cultural producers –such as historians, writers, journalists or filmmakers– and how they develop their activity within the realm of the narrative.

Regarding historical narrative and its validation, British historian J. H. Hexter's also uses the term *common sense* from a pragmatic perspective to underscore that

47] See Gramsci, Antonio 1999, pp. 131-147.
48] Ibid., p. 769.
49] Ibid., p. 630.

historians' effort in "making sense about the past" is not very different from what we –as *Everyman*– try to do making sense in the course of our everyday lives.[50] Regarding Hexter's contribution, historian Geoffrey Roberts illustrates that "common sense, common reasoning and common experience are deployed to pattern, interpret and explain the world".[51] But as practitioners of a discipline attached to certain aims, scholarly ethics and practical matters, historians deploy this *common sense* differently, often using varied sources to sustain their narrative –which Hexter called *historical storytelling*. We can consider how closely this distinction between the use of *common sense* for *Everyman* and the historian echoes Gramsci's reflection on the activities of intellectuals.

However, rhetorical devices and aesthetic decisions are not the only interventions providing meaning to historical narratives. Walter Benjamin warned that the whole process is filled with moral choices too. In his praise of historical materialism as a qualitative methodology that improved the understanding of humanity's place in the *everlasting now* and awoke the historian's empathy towards the *oppressed*, Benjamin noted a relevant aspect regarding the functional use of history as a discipline and the responsibility of its practitioners:

> "To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it "the way it really was" ... It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger. ... In every era the attempt must be made anew to wrest tradition away from a conformism that is about to overpower it".[52]

As the practice of representing history appears as a responsible act in "seizing hold of memory" for Benjamin, we can examine the relevance of memory here in relation to the flexible, fragmentary and contradictory nature Gramsci attributes to it, and in opposition to monolithic tendencies of established official history as *common sense*. These are important values in the dialectical forging of narratives that constitute our historical knowledge and in exploring possible alternatives within it. Benjamin's concern about the threat of conformism could recall Gramsci's reflections on the conformist component of *common sense* and the need to both use and challenge it within the formation of a new *good sense*. We can underline the importance that both authors give to the responsibility of the historian regarding these matters, as a social intellectual agent.

Therefore, considering the temporary component of historical interpretation as a continuous dialogue between past and present, the responsibility of historians in "seizing hold of memory" is a key aspect in the transition from the conformist *common sense* to the alternative *good sense* that intellectuals can facilitate –an effort that we can argue the intellectuals engaged in Latin American testimonial literature and

50] Roberts, Geoffrey 1999, 'J. H. Hexter: Narrative History and Common Sense', *Chronicon*, 3, p. 41.
51] Ibid.
52] As Benjamin noted within the text, the phrase "the way it really was" was taken from Leopold von Ranke, referring critically to Ranke's empiricist views on historiography. Benjamin, Walter 1969, *Illuminations*, translated by Harry Zohn, New York: Schocken Books, p. 255.

Third Cinema implicitly aimed at. As consensus is achieved *intersubjectively* while different groups compete for proving their viewpoint as hegemonic and establishing it as *true* knowledge, the role of the *narrator of the past* is critical in forming the notions that are being debated throughout this process. And these very notions and debates provide the foundation over which socially agreed upon *truth* can be constituted.

Gramsci's work is particularly inspiring for problematising both the subject of history and the subjectivity and ideological motivations of the intellectuals in charge of creating historical knowledge through narrative. Both realms appear intimately related and essential for any discussion on interpretation and representation. This is important from a cognitive perspective: that is, when interrogating the possibilities of achieving actual knowledge through those processes. It is necessary to clarify the value of *intersubjectivity* in this debate.

ON *INTERSUBJECTIVITY*

The term *intersubjectivity* refers to our inherently social being, a quality that emphasises the interaction present in forming knowledge, as it is present in the works of Gramsci, Bruner or Jameson discussed above. Nevertheless, for the purpose of being precise with the usage that is given to the notion in this context, it is particularly relevant to decode the definition of objectivity in Gramsci's work, as it is central to it and of great importance to the subject being studied here. By objectivity, Gramsci refers to universal subjectivity or *intersubjectivity*, which in practice means the creation of a collective subject by a determined group articulated around the same objective. This is essential to our understanding of knowledge as part of the struggle of different social forces for hegemony.

Brazilian philosopher and political scientist Carlos Nelson Coutinho, a key figure in studying Gramsci and his influence in Brazil and Latin America,[53] writes that the social accomplishment of this common objective implies that "the actors share an equally common set of *subjective* notions, values and beliefs, ... that they are moved by a collective will".[54] Thus, any objective social phenomena shared *intersubjectively* by a large group of people, such as a culture or religion, becomes an "organic ideology", turning into a universal value within the social reality of the group. What is objectively social means universally *intersubjective*. Coutinho proposes that, despite its relativist component, Gramsci's notion of objectivity "is an indispensable tool for a historical-materialist understanding of the intersubjective forms of social interaction".[55] Society appears then, in terms taken from political scientist Robert W. Cox, as "an intersubjective order" where "people understand the entities and principles

53] See Coutinho, Carlos Nelson 1998, *Gramsci e America Latina*, São Paulo: Paz e Terra, Coutinho, Carlos Nelson 1986, 'Gramsci en Brasil', *Cuadernos Políticos*, 46, pp. 24-35, and Coutinho, Carlos Nelson 1991, 'Gramsci y Brasil: Variadas Lecturas de un Pensamiento', *Nueva Sociedad*, 115, pp. 104-113.
54] Coutinho, Carlos Nelson 2012, *Gramsci's Political Thought*, Leiden: Brill, p. 74.
55] Ibid., p. 75.

upon which it is based in roughly the same way". Their material experiences ratify their *conception of the world*. And by sharing and agreeing on their conception, "they reproduce it by their actions".[56]
This aspect is crucial for Gramsci's reflection on hegemony and the struggle for it, because the "socially objective" necessarily calls for a "construction of an *intersubjective* universe of beliefs and values",[57] which is related to the formation of "consensus" as a dialogue for the benefit of the group. For Gramsci, the transition from *common sense* to *good sense* could lead to a new "regulated society" and alternative social order. Thus, as Coutinho notes

> "The intersubjective conception of objectivity and the understanding of hegemony as consensus allowed Gramsci to provide the philosophical foundations for a democratic-contractual theory for the establishment of socialism".[58]

It is within this realm that the term *intersubjectivity* can be thought of for instance as referring to the role of collective memory in the cultural practices under scrutiny in this study, but also as a central notion for debating public history and how its narratives forge cultural identities. In this regard, considering the properties of narrative and its social significance, Bruner suggests that

> "What creates culture, surely, must be a "local" capacity for accruing stories of happenings of the past into some sort of diachronic structure that permits a continuity into the present –in short, to construct a history, a tradition, a legal system, instruments assuring historical continuity if not legitimacy. ... The perpetual construction and reconstruction of the past provide precisely the forms of canonicity that permit us to recognize when a breach has occurred and how it might be interpreted".[59]

Thus, shaping our past experiences in narrative forms is not just a mechanism of the historian's craft. It is also a mechanism of the human mind that responds to the need for sharing and transmitting knowledge collectively and comprehensively to future generations, empowering the *intersubjective* values and beliefs that constitute a culture. Therefore, we could ponder how Bruner's reflection on the constant "construction and reconstruction of the past" that builds culture is intimately related to Gramsci's thought on memory and *common sense*. As a construction of our mind, the narrative serves to assist us in understanding the world *intersubjec-*

56] Cox, Robert W., 'Structural Issues for Global Governance: Implications for Europe', in Gill, Stephen (ed.) 1993, *Gramsci, Historical Materialism and International Relations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 265.
57] Coutinho, Carlos Nelson 2012, p. 75.
58] Ibid., p. 76.
59] Bruner, Jerome 1991, p. 20.

tively, by organising, forming and transmitting knowledge in an efficient manner, covering communicative, cognitive and aesthetic values. Narratives dialogue in constant competition in forging their own perspectives as culture, for establishing or legitimating hegemony. Our mind needs the narrative to abstract meaningful ideas about the world and learn from past experiences to project that knowledge into the future, solidifying *conceptions of the world*. These *conceptions of the world* expressed through narrative, whether hegemonic or subaltern, are never definitive, but instead they are open to constant rethinking and reformulation.

Bringing the term *intersubjectivity* to deal with the question of the formation of knowledge in the dialectical struggle for hegemony serves to break with universalising reductive and homogeneous views of the collective. Instead, it renders an alternative treatment of history not fixed to so-called universal models of narratives –such as those based on *heroes*–, but rather one that values and allows for difference, where the history of the local must emerge. This aspect addresses dialectically the tension between universal and local, hegemony and subaltern, oppressor and oppressed. The concept of *intersubjectivity* –as suggested in Gramsci's writings–, and the constitution of a collective consensus based on historical events, helps us understand how narratives provide meaning to the past by forming specific knowledge. By relating *intersubjectivity* to social objectivity we can interrogate how the different *conceptions of the world* struggle for hegemony in the various realms of knowledge. The knowledge to which we attribute the value of *truth* is then a fundamental aspect related to hegemony and power. For this reason, cultural fields and the activities of intellectuals play an essential role in the struggle for hegemony.

The role of the *narrator* of history as intellectual is key in either reinforcing or subverting the value of official history as knowledge and *truth* in the formation of the historical thinking of society. Gramsci's explorations of *common sense* suggest that the dialectic with hegemony is necessary for creating an alternative historical thinking –one that integrates the values of the subaltern and shifts the subject of history. This dialogue is a must for any practice with the purpose of subverting hegemony and its official historical discourse. The subaltern struggles for hegemony, but also recognises what is established as knowledge and *common sense*. Negating the existence of this *commonsensical* knowledge leads to blocking any dialectical position in this battle, and weakens any possibility of success.

RELATIVISM OF HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE

The relativist component of the notion of *intersubjectivity* applied to knowledge, due to the reciprocity that it suggests between ideology and science, highlights one problem: to what degree is the possibility of achieving knowledge from past experiences *real* and not simply *socially constructed*? Or in other words, can we ever be sure about *what we know* about the past, about our historical knowledge? The obvious answer is no, we cannot. But there is another way to approach the is-

sue in tune with the relevance Gramsci gives to praxis in the social context: can we make practical use of our historical knowledge for the social needs of today? If so, the answer would be yes. Actually, we do that every day in our socially practical understanding of the world as a continuum and shifting present.

Some postmodern positions on this matter go as far as to suggest that historical knowledge is unachievable and that what is considered relevant is just a matter of the formation of discourse. For instance, regarding the historical film and the question of accuracy in it, White asserts that

> "the criterion for determining what shall count as "accuracy of detail" depends on the "way" chosen to represent both "the past" and our thought about its "historical significance" alike".[60]

But White's absolute emphasis on how historical discourses are constructed contains problematic ethical implications within the realm of moral judgement. If "accuracy of detail" depends solely on the "way chosen" to portray history and its relevance for us, then how can we judge differently the historical discourse related to a victim and his tormentor, an aspect central for those narratives focused on the subaltern? Does it merely depend on the "way chosen" to represent the past and give it meaning or to construct the historical discourse? For research like this, in which testimony is so significant for defining the subject of history in the practices of cultural representation, these are pertinent questions.

The question of discourse or language in confrontation with meaning is a central issue in the realm of social and historical interpretation for the practices under study in the subsequent chapters. Both testimonial literature and Third Cinema implicitly propose that while the *how* is an important issue in any text, we must never forget the major importance of the *what* as the central thematic element of the text –the author's view on the subject matter. Both are relevant aspects and none should be avoided or dismissed, but it is necessary to take into account the limitations of interpretative methods based primarily –if not solely– on discourse analysis. The *how* and the *what* are essential in the communicative and cognitive realms, but deserve to be treated dialectically for a fulfilling approach to those aspects of production and reception that are so significant in any of the vast fields of narrative.

Nevertheless, the degree of relativism in the *intersubjective* formation of knowledge suggested by Gramsci does not necessarily clash with the principles of history as a discipline. On the contrary, this very relativism appears as a methodological part of its disciplinary aims in the process of validation. Gaddis suggests that the abstracting shift from literal to narrative representation implies that "the part is as great as the whole", but also that the proofs and statements of the historian are

60] White, Hayden 1988, 'Historiography and Historiophoty', *The American Historical Review*, 93, 5, p. 1199.

never definitive, but limited and incomplete –provisional instead of conclusive.[61] And thus he concludes:

> "our modes of representation determine whatever it is we're representing ... [T]he act of observation alters what's being observed. Which means that objectivity as a consequence is hardly possible, and that there is, therefore, no such a thing as truth".[62]

Nevertheless, historians –as well as other *narrative makers*– reproduce patterns of regularity to explain vanished events, relate them to a sense of universality and make conclusions about our experience according to past continuities and contingencies that might be useful in the future. Attuned with Ricoeur's findings on the reciprocity between *human time* and narrative,[63] Gaddis underlines how time defines this whole process:

> "We might define the future, then, as the zone within which contingencies and continuities coexist independently of one another; the past as the place where their relationship is inextricably fixed; and the present as the singularity that brings the two together, so that continuities intersect contingencies, contingencies encounter continuities, and through this process history is made".[64]

Gaddis asserts that there is no single representation that explains everything, because the purpose of a representation is none other than to explain "sufficiently". Thus, the shift from the literal to the narrative equals the shift from replicating to representing.[65] Therefore, the role of these designed patterns is essential to understanding how history is constructed according to them. The key goal in this area of historical interpretation is to match both representation and reality, which will be increasingly more precise with the accrual of investigations around the subject. And in this regard, as well as in the role of history in the formation of culture, we can ponder the relevance of what Bruner calls "the process of joint narrative accrual" as "one of the principal ways in which we work "mentally" in common". As he concludes, the "human mind cannot express its nascent powers without the enablement of the symbolic system of culture".[66]

Assuming all these aspects are either the historian's challenge or characteristics of the discipline of history, can we conclude that the synthetic, abstractionist

61] Gaddis, John Lewis 2002, pp. 26, 27.
62] Ibid., p. 29.
63] See Ricoeur, Paul 1984, *Time and Narrative, Volume 1*, translated by Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer, London: The University of Chicago Press, and Ricoeur, Paul 1980, 'Narrative Time', *Critical Inquiry*, 7, 1, pp. 169-190.
64] Gaddis, John Lewis 2002, p. 31.
65] Ibid., pp. 32-33.
66] Bruner, Jerome 1991, p. 20.

or economical nature of the narrative form excludes the possibility of achieving knowledge about past events? Gaddis replies to the dilemma as follows:

> "[I]t would be imprudent for historians to decide, from the fact that we have no absolute basis for measuring time and space, that they can't know anything about what happened within them".[67]

Or, in terms closer to Gramsci's rhetoric: as regular users of historical knowledge, we manage *conceptions of the world* in a practical sense and attribute to them the degree of knowledge we use every day to negotiate the social context we live in. It is within this dialectical scope, and in association with our contextual praxis, that the relativist component of knowledge should be understood in any study where meaning, and not only discourse, acquires a central role.

There is another relevant aspect to tackle in the ethical dimension of discourse-based relativism, as expressed by White above: whether the focus on the formation of discourse could inhibit the production of meaning, whether the emphasis on the *how* could inhibit our judgement and action regarding the *what*. Besides being a key inquiry for the practices that are under scrutiny in this work, this is also an aspect that affects the forging of our judgement and then our capacity to act accordingly. If we relativise *what we know* about the past to the degree of suggesting that we *can never know what really happened*, thus excluding the temporary validation of historical knowledge itself, how can we express any judgement? And if we skip over the responsibility of validating any sort of historical knowledge that provides meaning to *what happened*, without judgement... how can we intervene in history, *make history*, narrate it? How can we *act*?

These moral aspects demand that we focus our attention on two other areas as well. On one hand, there is the question of the subject of history –the emphasis on the subject that defines our interpretation and representation of history. By understanding history in the dialectical struggle for hegemony, we must necessarily interrogate from which side we *make history* and how the identification with its subject may affect the narrative. The second question has to do with the relationship between historical knowledge and our capacity to act. If this knowledge can serve to identify the historical conflicts underneath our social relationships and our identification with the subject of history also affects the formation of our moral judgement, can historical knowledge and moral judgement also activate our response to these conflicts? These inquiries are very meaningful when dealing with a figure such as Rodolfo Walsh and his contributions to culture through testimonial literature, while they are also central to the cultural practices under study here.

67] Gaddis, John Lewis 2002, p. 34.

Bertolt Brecht and Walter Benjamin playing chess.

SHIFTING THE SUBJECT OF HISTORY

As we have seen, Walter Benjamin already warned that the historian's activity in providing meaning to the past and "seizing hold of memory" in its representation is filled with moral choices. This responsibility is intimately related to its position on the subject under study. Therefore, problematising the subject of history is an essential aspect one must cope with when interpreting and representing it. Both cognitively and communicatively, this aspect can serve to interrogate the possibilities of achieving knowledge throughout the process of *translating* the past into narrative. The works and practices interested in the question of the subaltern tend to expose the limitations of traditional historiography when dealing with historically marginalised subjects. To do so they shift their subject of history, turning their focus to the subaltern –the Other of history.

Benjamin used a metaphor to suggest that traditional historicism suffered an "indolence of the heart" that historical materialist methodology had cracked: *acedia*, a state of apathy in which the subject is not concerned about his position or the condition of the world. Thus, Benjamin related historicism with empathy to illustrate that it had traditionally empathised with the victor, creating a discourse that "invariably benefits the rulers".[68] Benjamin adopted Marx's attempt to achieve a unifying picture of history and embraced his binary axiom that described the history of class struggle as the history of "oppressor and oppressed".[69] This caused

68] Benjamin, Walter 1969, p. 256.
69] See Marx, Karl and Engels, Friedrich 2002, *The Communist Manifesto*, London: Penguin.

him to suggest that "[t]here is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism",[70] and led him to define the side he picked in the *nunc stans* or "continuum of history":[71]

> "The tradition of the oppressed teaches us that "the state of emergency" in which we live is not the exception but the rule. We must attain to a conception of history that is in keeping with this insight".[72]

By this, Benjamin emphasised the central role of the subject of history for every historical narrative meant to confront homogeneous deterministic discourses. Switching the focus onto the subject and bringing up the need for specificity and difference for a new historicism confronted with universal homogeneity[73] are both of common concern for those narratives interested in the subaltern. The cultural practices explored in this study shared this concern, and in this regard, it is pertinent to keep in mind some words of Benjamin that channelled the thought connected with their practice when he wrote that "[n]o man or men but the struggling, oppressed class itself is the depositary of historical knowledge".[74]

Gramsci also acknowledged in his writings how the subaltern had passed from being "a thing" to becoming "a historical person, a protagonist", noticing that

> "if yesterday it was not responsible, because "resisting" a will external to itself, now it feels itself to be responsible because it is no longer resisting but an agent, necessarily active and taking the initiative".[75]

Nonetheless, Gramsci's notion of the subaltern, in relation to his body of thought on the formation of hegemony, offers a more complex view on the question of power and dominance than the oppressor-oppressed binary. While the latter suggests a relationship between the parts based simply on coercion, Gramsci's hegemony-subaltern binary underlines a richer process in which consent also allows the perpetuation of hegemonic social orders, where pleasure and entertainment might play a central role. Therefore, Gramsci's contribution does not offer a blind alignment to the subaltern, but a fragmentary multi-layered critical view about it. The subaltern's folklore as *common sense* can become an obstacle for the active counterhegemonic struggle, which is often disorganised. For Gramsci, this is an area where both politics and culture merge and the role of the intellectual is critical.

The focus on the subaltern as a collective subject calls for an alternative examination of its *intersubjective* voice. Placing its *intersubjectivity* as a central

70] Benjamin, Walter 1969, p. 256.
71] Ibid., p. 262.
72] Ibid., p. 257.
73] Ibid., pp. 262-263.
74] Ibid., p. 260.
75] Gramsci, Antonio 1999, p. 647.

character of history is an interpretative moral choice that necessarily affects the representation of history, as well as the dialectic struggle between hegemony and the subaltern for embodying knowledge. It is necessary then to address the other ethical question exposed above: can the acknowledgment of the subaltern, its memory as an *intersubjective* narrative of *truth* and its effect on our judgement lead us to act today for subverting continuing injustice with the hope of improving our future?

MORAL JUDGEMENT AND PRAXIS ON THE *MOVING TRAIN*

Historian Howard Zinn, a key figure on the study of the subaltern and known for both his writings and his political activism, who labelled his work as "radical history",[76] faced these fundamental moral questions openly in his texts. Underlining the significance of the past in the different stages of time, Zinn offers a positive view on the capacity of humans to transform the continuum shifting process of history:

> "The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory".[77]

Zinn wrote widely about the power of history to untie people by learning about the past, something that he thought could favour active engagement for changing the world and not just contemplating it. But he was not naïve about the matter:

> "History is not inevitably useful. It can bind us or free us ... It can oppress any resolve to act by mountains of trivia, by diverting us into intellectual games, by pretentious "interpretations" which spur contemplation rather than action, by limiting our vision to an endless story of disaster and thus promoting cynical withdrawal, by befogging us with the encyclopedic eclecticism of the standard textbook".[78]

In his work, he focused on historical processes led by the popular masses, often attending to the efforts of anonymous committed people. Zinn developed a craft passionately rooted in counterhegemonic goals in order to fight the mainstream historical studies tending to favour the role of leaders as engineers of complex historical processes. His best-known work, *A People's History of the United States* published in 1980, was followed in 2004 by *Voices of a People's History of the United States*, edited in collaboration with Anthony Arnove. The significance of the lat-

76] See Zinn, Howard, 'What is Radical History', in Vaughn, Stephen (ed.) 1985, *The Vital Past. Writings on the Uses of History*, Athens: University of Georgia Press, pp. 158-169.
77] Zinn, Howard 2007, *A Power Governments Cannot Suppress*, San Francisco: City Lights Books, p. 270.
78] Zinn, Howard, in Vaughn, Stephen (ed.) 1985, p. 168.

ter lies in being a sourcebook of speeches, articles, essays, poetry and songs by those whose stories provided the grounds for the first book, including Mary Harris "Mother" Jones, Upton Sinclair, Malcolm X, Alice Walker, Martin Luther King, Allen Ginsberg, Angela Davis, Noam Chomsky and Mumia Abu-Jamal.

We can think about the ways in which this method suggests that Zinn's historical narrative agrees with Gramsci's view of history as a fragmented field configured by a wide variety of accruing sources that affect our thinking about the past. His formal proposal regarding *telling history* and intervention in the discipline highlights the need for counterhegemonic moves within the realms of popular philosophy to subvert *commonsensical* hegemonic thought. An example of this is also the project that followed the publications: a series of performances of the texts and songs were put on stage and shot for a documentary, *The People Speak*, released in 2009. Directed by Zinn himself, Anthony Arnove and Chris Moore, the cast included well-known figures like Matt Damon, Morgan Freeman, Kerry Washington, Rosario Dawson, Viggo Mortensen, Marisa Tomei, Josh Brolin, Sean Penn, Don Cheadle, Danny Glover, Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen or Ry Cooder, which facilitated public interest and distribution. When Zinn died soon after, others imported the success of the project, as in the case of *The People Speak UK* (2010), boosted by Colin Firth, who directed it along with Anthony Arnove and Stuart McDonald.

Zinn's work is intimately related to his observations on history as a discipline and its practice. Therefore, he states that "the historian cannot choose to be neutral; he writes on a moving train".[79] As the process of *making history* is always selective, he emphasises how the process depends on the values of the selector. And thus Zinn exposes that objectivity is never possible or desirable. On the contrary, the obsession with facts means the hiding of judgements behind them, as well as the beliefs and values of the historian. And so he reflected on his own experience on the matter as follows:

> "I was relieved when I decided that keeping one's judgments out of historical narrative was impossible, because I had already determined that I would never do that. ... I was not going to pretend to neutrality".[80]

Zinn's understanding of history and the historian's craft recalls the terms in which Brazilian educator Paulo Freire referred to education, adopting much of Gramsci's reflections on the field:

> "Washing one's hands" of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral".[81]

79] Ibid., p. 158.
80] Zinn, Howard 1997, *The Zinn Reader*, New York: Seven Stories Press, p. 17.
81] Freire, Paulo 1985, *The Politics of Education. Culture, Power and Liberation*, translated by Donaldo Maceo, Westport: Bergin & Garvey Publishers, p. 122.

Regarding neutrality, we can also underscore that the central character of the script that led to this study, Rodolfo Walsh, expressed a similar view in relation to the banning of the Peronist movement in Argentina and the identification of the working class with its political doctrine:

> "If we admit that the basic antinomy of the regime, anti-Peronism-Peronism, reflects the main contradiction of the system, oppressor-oppressed, I'm not going to be on the side of the oppressors or of the neutrals".[82]

The Spanish journalist Pascual Serrano has praised the figure of Walsh in his book *Against Neutrality* (*Contra la Neutralidad*)[83] –alongside John Reed, Ryszard Kapuściński, Edgar Snow and Robert Capa–, in his search for positive and constructive historical examples of committed journalists to inspire new generations to confront the mainstream conformism dominating the contemporary media. Serrano focuses on these figures due to their partisan commitment and ethical principles in their work, indissoluble from their representations of the world they knew, full of unbalanced conflicts between oppressors and oppressed. A common aspect of all of these authors is that they avoided neutrality in order to represent the reality that surrounded them *by any means necessary*. Serrano opens his book with a quote of Gramsci against indifference, in which he expressed that "I believe that living means taking sides. Those who really live cannot help being a citizen and a partisan".[84] Gramsci's text continues with a powerful statement –not included in Serrano's book– regarding indifference and history that links with Zinn's view: "The indifference is the deadweight of history".[85]

Both history and journalism are selective processes that contain an active moral judgement, and thus neutrality is not possible to achieve in either of them. Objectivity as an absolute category simply does not exist. Instead, Serrano insists that neutrality always hides an ideological position. By being afraid to suggest any other position but the hegemonic, professionals submit their discourses to it. They reproduce it assuming that such a thing helps them to skip any ideological trace, while they validate and legitimate the hegemonic *conceptions of the world*. Instead of neutral, Serrano asserts that this makes them irresponsible professionally, becoming intellectual traders of the ideological motivations of the hegemony. They abandon any principles of journalism regarding its commitment with reality.[86]

For Zinn, the tension between his two roles as historian and activist produced both practical and theoretical inquiries about how social change could be achieved through effective and morally acceptable tactics, while maintaining hope in the face

82] Interview with Rodolfo Walsh in 'Operación Rodolfo Walsh', *Primera Plana*, 489, 13th June 1972, p. 39. (Translated by the author.)
83] Serrano, Pascual 2011, *Contra la Neutralidad*, Barcelona: Península.
84] Gramsci, Antonio 1917, 'I Hate the Indifferent', available in: http://eagainst.com/articles/antonio-gramsci-i-hate-the-indifferent/
85] Ibid.
86] Serrano, Pascual 2011, p. 16.

Howard Zinn with Noam Chomsky and other friends.

of defeat at the same time. He called this a "turn from simply practicing ... "history as private enterprise", to history as the work of a citizen"[87] –a slow shift in the role of the historian from passive observer to activist-scholar in a world searching for solutions. This change would make the historian "more than a scholar; it makes him a citizen in the ancient Athenian sense of the word".[88]

Zinn sees in the professionalisation of thinking –its turn towards disciplines linked to the idealist tradition and its confidence in expertise and universalism– a force that inhibits the ability to act, assuming the past as necessary by emphasising the weight of accumulated data. This view presents history as something so big that there is nothing we can do about the future. Zinn believes that this tradition is a "superfluous luxury" that leads to scholarly games instead of giving answers that address the needs of the people. He embraces Nietzsche to show how this view of history limited people's ability to see beyond one possible reality. Nietzsche saw these aspects of the teaching of history as deeply responsible for such a narrow and restricting view.[89] But Zinn also believes that history can be seen differently if we look at the possibilities that are never considered, understanding the past as a warning and an inspiring force to "counter myths" and act in the present.[90] For him, while assuming the limits of our experience, "the past ... suggests what can be, not what must be".[91] This does not mean we are actually free, as we are reminded constantly

87| Zinn, Howard, 1997, p. 509.
88] Ibid., p. 510.
89] See Nietzsche, Friedrich 2010, *The Use and Abuse of History*, New York: Cosimo.
90] Zinn, Howard, 1997, p. 510.
91] Ibid., p. 511.

by the factual world we live in. But to counterpoise it, we must act *as if* we are freer than we assume: we can never know how free we really are and what our chances are of changing the future.[92] For Zinn, in the *moving train* of the present, acting is the key to channelling the tension between the vanished past and the uncertain future. And thus he underlines that the major changes in history came from those that acted *as if* they could really change the oppressing reality that surrounded them.

Zinn's understanding of history and its practice aims to call for responsibility to the present and the future, instead of just to the act of researching the past, which has been traditionally the only realm for the historian's moral judgement. While debates about the past are necessary, pertinent and fruitful, Zinn's demand that historians maintain the responsibility of a citizen implies that the "blame in history ... [should be] based on the future and not the past".[93] This links the pedagogical potential of history to its capacity for enlightening us on humanity's relationship with *evil*, pointing to our potential to modify our future by demanding conscious activity. We can consider the link between these concerns and Gramsci's reflections on the intellectual, as he suggested that political responsibility and philosophical coherence are important elements for his task, something also essential for the practices of Latin American testimonial literature and Third Cinema. Zinn's activist view serves to demonstrate that the historian's responsibility is not just to acknowledge the events of the past and narrate them as accurately as possible. There is a moral dimension to his craft linked to the people's responsibility in their present and future. Those producing historical narratives have the potential to show the injustice of history, but also their craft must call for a judgement about it. As history can outrage us and boost us to act, it contains the capacity to incite social change.

It is necessary now to turn our gaze to the question of representation of the past through the form of the historical and biographical film. As it is a script that forms the practical base of this research and a script is a type of narrative form –linked potentially to the film field–, the representations of history and lives in films are a fruitful field to examine for the purpose of framing the proposal contained in the current study, as well as interrogating other aspects of historical interpretation. By exploring these realms other questions will naturally appear: can film represent the past as the written word does? Can the filmic forms of representation of history *substitute* or equal the functions covered by written historiography? And does film even have to represent the past as the written word does? Can the filmic forms of representation of history create or add something new to the realms of *historytelling*?

92] Ibid.
93] Ibid., 512.

CHAPTER 2

LIFE STORIES AS HISTORICAL NARRATIVES IN FILM

This chapter deals with a series of issues central to the representation of history in film. And for this purpose, it will first define some questions on the cognitive and communicative value of genre, in order to tackle the realm of the historical film and the biopic. Addressing these aspects is of great importance because these forms of historical representation deal with the historical matter in general as a way of *making history*. A study of this subject cannot bypass interrogating the historical film in comparison with written historiography, something that has been central for the major figures in the field. The effect of the historical film in moulding our historical thinking and collective memory is especially relevant to questioning the traditional

historiography's role. And this is particularly significant in a society increasingly mediated by audio-visual mediums both cognitively and communicatively, when more and more people learn about history through different media and probably most of them will never even open a history book.

Another element that we need to attend to in depth is the tension between both the universal –as in relation to myths, for example– and the local in the normative construction of culture as collective identity. Brunner tackled this aspect when he asserted that the ""local" capacity for accruing stories ... of the past" is an integral part of the creation of "a culture". As this research deals with aspects and practices so closely related to the study of the subaltern, this becomes a significant concern. In this regard, the notions of Gramsci introduced in the previous chapter are important for managing these questions. His reflections on historicism, hegemony and *common sense* contributed to bringing questions of local specificity, as opposed to universal determination, to the forefront of the discussion. We can argue that literary and cinematic practices such as Latin American testimonial literature and Third Cinema engage with these inquiries in relation to their own social and political context, as it will be examined in subsequent chapters.

Finally, it is necessary to underline that one of the salient characteristics of film as a narrative form belongs to the experience of the medium itself, which is quite different from the experience of reading a written text. Understanding the capacity of the audio-visual mediums to activate intelligent automatic sensorial responses that affect our emotional engagement with the message –favouring emotion over intellect and mediating the way we relate to knowledge– is central to this purpose. These aspects are particularly exploited in the case of dramatic movies. The very specific characteristics of this phenomenon exceed the realms of this research and deserve a separate work focused on them. Nevertheless, its implications need to be taken into account to a certain degree by any study covering the link between written and filmed history. This is an aspect that has formed the basis for many controversies and criticisms about the validity and credibility of the medium to create valuable historical documents, as well as its impact on the way we understand history.

The existence of innumerable polemics on the validity of the historical film as a historical document underlines the importance of these issues. Throughout this chapter, we will examine aspects linking to this issue that have been explored in the past by Theodor Adorno, Roland Barthes and Leo Löwenthal, among others, and are still present in discussions related to almost every film release today. For example, Julian Assange recently dismissed Bill Condon's film on Wikileaks *The Fifth Estate* (2013) with the following words: "Feature films are the most powerful and insidious shapers of public perception, because they fly under the radar of conscious exclusion".[94] For a genre such as the biopic, intimately linked to biographical literature as a system of representation that takes a character and places him at the centre of the historical narrative, this concern is even more relevant, as it has traditionally favoured the role

94] http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-24471659

of the individual. And thus, this use of narrative appears as a way of simplifying the complexity of social relationships that characterises historical processes.

THE COGNITIVE AND COMMUNICATIVE VALUE OF GENRE

Before exploring the debates on the historical film or the biopic, the notion of genre should be examined. This is so because this study endorses *generic transformations* as part of a dialectical process with certain hegemonic forms of film representation to favour the emergence of alternative narratives that might serve the interests of the subaltern. In this regard, the emphasis on a dialectical position aims at exposing the necessity of establishing a dialogue in film with established conceptions and conventions, such as Hollywood's dominant generic forms of cognitive and communicative representation. This is an unavoidable question to face if the goal is to provide an alternative and successful transformation of the medium's possibilities for subaltern narratives and audiences. Thus, as the question of genre is an essential issue for every form of representation, framing this subject serves to manage both the realms of the historical film and the biopic, as well as their role in affecting our historical thinking. The scope of their link to written historiography is a complicated but necessary topic to deal with, as both forms of narrative representation forge the historical knowledge of the public.

Normally, genres serve to categorise narratives by labelling the specificities of their texts in connection to the audience's expectations. A text's production –how the text is brought to the audience– and reception –how the text is read– are essential aspects in this process, as both are intimately related to the notion of genre. As film critic Sarah Berry-Flynt asserts:

> "[g]enres are socially organized sets of relations between texts that function to enable certain relations between texts and viewers. Because they organize the framework of expectations within which reading takes place, they help to enable the possibility of communication".[95]

Covering all the different theories around genre exceeds the scope of this work. Nonetheless, it is necessary to frame certain significant aspects. For example, from a cognitive view, the normative function of narrative presents genre as the different conventions by which we cope with conflicts existing in the narrative. As Bruner suggests, genres guide our mind and sensibilities through specific paths:

> "while they might be representations of social ontology, they are also inventions to a particular style of epistemology. ... [T]hey may have quite as

95] Berry-Flynt, Sarah, 'Genre', in Miller, Toby and Stam, Robert (ed.) 2004, *A Companion to Film Theory*, Malden, Oxford and Victoria: Blackwell, p. 41.

> powerful an influence in shaping our modes of thought as they have in creating the realities that their plots depict".[96]

As Daniel Chandler notes, both in drama and film, genres are defined as "particular conventions of content ... and/or form"[97] of their texts. Thus, genres are descriptive terms that indicate the nature and organisation of texts, determined by both "repetition and difference",[98] because, as types so closely related to the audience's expectations –and thus driving the audience's interpretations–, *difference* is crucial to appealing to the spectator's interest.

There is not a definitive consensus on the classification procedure for genres. On the contrary, it varies widely from author to author and social diversity keeps the field open to constant reconsiderations and mouldings. As film theorist Robert Stam notes,

> "[w]hile some genres are based on story content (the war film), other are borrowed from literature (comedy, melodrama) or from other media (the musical). Some are performer-based (the Astaire-Rogers films) or budget-based (blockbusters), while others are based on artistic status (the art film), racial identity (Black cinema), location (the Western) or sexual orientation (Queer cinema)".[99]

Throughout the process of categorising genres, Chandler reveals that what some theorists name as a certain genre, others might consider a sub-genre (or a super-genre).[100] This is often the case of the biopic in relation to the historical film. Despite these controversies, for practical reasons this study will treat the biopic as a genre of its own, though one which is intimately linked with the historical film, a link which is necessary to explore.

From the perspective of communication, one relevant aspect is the relationship of genre with what the Frankfurt School called the *culture industries*, and very particularly with those that exert a hegemonic influence, as is the case with Hollywood. As Douglas Kellner asserts, in the works of the authors of the Frankfurt School, mainly in the 30's, the *culture industries* referred to the industrial and massive production of culture led by commercial interests that served to legitimate ideologically the capitalist social order and to integrate individuals within the realm of its configuration.[101] It has been proposed that the studio system of Hollywood made use of genres, and their codes and conventions in order to maximise the profit

96] Bruner, Jerome 1991, 'The Narrative Construction of Reality', *Critical Inquiry*, 18, p. 15.
97] Chandler, Daniel 1997, 'An Introduction to Genre Theory', available in: http://visual-memory.co.uk/daniel/Documents/intgenre/intgenre.html.
98] Ibid. Chandler borrows the phrase from Steve Neale in Neale, Steve 1980, *Genre*, London: British Film Institute. See also Neale, Steve, 'Questions of Genre', in Miller, Toby and Stam, Robert (ed.) 2000, *Film and Theory. An Anthology*, Malden and Oxford: Blackwell.
99] Quoted in Chandler, Daniel 1997.
100] Ibid.
101] Kellner, Douglas, 'Culture Industries', in Miller, Toby and Stam, Robert (ed.) 2004, pp. 202-205

Paths of Glory, Stanley Kubrick, 1957.

of its cultural products.[102] As Kellner asserts, when aesthetics and content were normalised through "an immediately recognizable system of conventions", genres were constituted and became useful and proper forms of production for the commercial goals of Hollywood's culture industry.[103]

Following these trends we can see how by the 30's and 40's the major Hollywood studios were clearly defined by their style and distinctive genres.[104] The collapse of the studio system in the 50's and the diversification of audio-visual mediums, like the expansion of television in the 60's, forced the industry to find creative ways to appeal to audience. This opened the doors to the artistic impulse of directors like Stanley Kubrick, Sydney Lumet, Robert Altman and Arthur Penn, and possibly complicated the formulaic notions of genre that had been profitable until then.[105]

Thus, while genres can optimise cognitive and communicative purposes, they can also create a set of problems when analysing film productions retrospectively. Historically, as the authors of the Frankfurt School suggested, the reductive use of the genre notion in film has participated in larger processes of homogenisation,

102] Ibid., p. 210.
103] Ibid.
104] Kellner notes that "Warner Brothers was known for a gritty 1930s-era realism, featuring tough gangster films, hard-edged domestic melodrama, crusading biopics, and energetic musicals; Universal was renowned for its atmospheric horror films, MGM for its colorful musicals and spectaculars, and David Selznick was associated with big-budget quality pictures, both when he worked for other studios and after he formed Selznick International Pictures in 1935". In ibid.
105] Ibid., p. 213.

reducing critical positions and legitimating the dominant ones in harmony with the established social order. Naturalising and normalising the generally accepted *common sense* as universal is part of this process. And thus, the tension between universalisation –or mythologisation– and cultural specificity –the local, the different– is also present when dealing with the limitations of the notion of genre.

As for the realm of this study, the notion of genre when applied to the historical film has fuzzy edges, as it is often difficult to identify with precision what defines a film as historical over other categories, or how this category is combined with other generic types. Within the field of historical films, some might apply the label to examples as varied as Luchino Visconti's *The Leopard* (*Il Gattopardo,* 1963) or James Cameron's *Titanic* (1997). But, while both films fictionalise characters in the middle of a historical event or period, Visconti's film, based on Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa's novel, attaches the drama to the historical subject that the film's text deals with –the decay of the aristocracy and the irruption of a new social order during the *Risorgimento*. On the other hand, *Titanic* uses a famous historical event simply to frame a love story as the centre of the drama. The universal connotations of the romance suggest that it could have taken place anywhere else in any other time. Thus, the interest of the historical film as a form of representation of the past rests on the first type. Or as Robert Rosenstone asserts, to take a film as historical, it must engage with the current historical knowledge and debates about the subject that the film deals with.[106] Nevertheless, these examples prove how problematic it is to deal with the notion of genre in an area as wide as the historical film, as these films tend to be hybrid and impure combinations of genres. For this reason, we could argue that there is a lack of coherence among the elements in play in historical films.

The problems exposed here, especially those derived from the process of mythologisation, are particularly explicit in the case of a genre like the biopic. Thus, these are key aspects when considering the practical proposal behind this study, as it intends to offer a possible tool for rethinking and re-elaborating the genre, in order to dialectically confront the hegemonic Hollywood model of *historytelling*.

THE HISTORICAL FILM AS A CHALLENGE FOR HISTORIANS

Let's now turn and look at the realm of the historical film, a wide area that at points overlaps with written historiography in its practice of narrative creation of the past. Due to the specific characteristics of the medium and its popular resonance, the historical film appears as a challenge for historians and their traditional forms of representation. Both written historiography and the historical film share a common aim of *making history*, as an interpretative process of selection and pattern

106] Rosenstone, Robert, 'The Historical Film: Looking at the Past in a Postliterate Age', in Landy, Marcia (ed.) 2001, *The Historical Film. History and Memory in Media*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, p. 63.

formation. But the difference between the two mediums modifies their message too, and this brings us to the question of what might be the central aspects of historical film's contribution to our historical thinking.

Studies examining these inquiries are relatively recent. In 1988, in an issue of *American Historical Review* addressing the topic, two prominent historians dialogued about these themes in their respective articles: Robert Rosenstone in *History in Images/History in Words* and Hayden White in *Historiography and Historiophoty*. Rosenstone, well known for his writings on historical films, a media he has explored as a consultant for Warren Beatty's biopic on John Reed, *Reds* (1981), among other movies, acknowledges the limitations of most films to elaborate complex historical discourses and avoid linear stories. Contrary to what is expected from written historiography, films tend to embrace a single interpretation of past events due to their economical narrative conventions.[107] But nevertheless, as White notes, both mediums are the result of "processes of condensation, displacement, symbolization, and qualification"[108] that use their narrative codes to elaborate representations of the past, affecting their discourse. And in this regard, both Rosenstone and White question the general reliability of the word as the best tool to achieve historical knowledge, especially in times like ours. Therefore, as Rosenstone underlines, it is important to explore the huge potential of film as a medium of mass communication in a society where the audio-visual has become the main vehicle in forming knowledge, providing meaning and thus generating historical thinking. Considering the temptation of using the medium for these purposes, he wonders:

> "Can one really put history onto film, history that will satisfy those of us who devote our lives to understanding, analyzing, and recreating the past in words? ... [I]s it possible to tell historical stories on film and not lose our professional or intellectual souls?"[109]

In her studies on the uses of the past in cinema, professor Marcia Landy traces a significant proposal on the historical film from a Gramscian perspective. In Landy's view, film operates closer to popular history than written historiography. She calls for a rethinking of the values of collective memory and the oral transmission of knowledge, challenging the role of official history in generating and empowering hegemony. And in this regard, questioning and shifting the subject of history and underlining the interpretative value of empathy as a critical commitment against the established becomes a central concern for the subaltern. As Landy asserts:

> "In its commonsensical orientation, popular history, as opposed to official history, unwittingly exposes an inevitable disjunction between, on the one

107] Rosenstone, Robert 1988, 'History in Images/History in Words: Reflections on the Possibility of Really Putting History onto Film', *The American Historical Review*, 93, 5, p. 1174.
108] White, Hayden 1988, 'Historiography and Historiophoty', *The American Historical Review*, 93, 5, p. 1194.
109] Rosenstone, Robert 1988, p. 1175.

> hand, the expectations that the text arouses and, on the other, the contingent nature of audience expectations and knowledge".[110]

And thus Landy concludes:

> "Common sense as folklore is Gramsci's instrument for examining the persistence of the past and its rejuvenation of new forms".[111]

Landy notes that the contributions of Gramsci "are particularly helpful in understanding the powerful hold of the past in the present".[112] His reflections on popular philosophy and folklore as *common sense* suggest that history is the result of multiple inherited forms of knowledge preserved in past institutions, often inconsistent, contradictory and fragmented. And these institutions involve collective memory, oral stories, social customs, popular wisdom, legal statements, religion or morality.[113] Thus, Landy observes that when analysing what aspects of folklore construct *common sense*, Gramsci is particularly "sensitive to folklore's numerous and constantly shifting forms; its specific, immediate, and local manifestations; and its general uses of the past".[114]

In connection with this vision, French historian Marc Ferro considers the historical film as "a counter-history to the official history".[115] For Ferro, the finest filmmakers can "give meaning to history",[116] "having a message" that is ideologically motivated and thus taking part in the historical debates, in confrontation with hegemonic ideological fashions.[117] Ferro understands that evoking the past often reflects the conflicts of the present. But when a filmmaker looks at the past to confront the omissions of the official institutions about it, his knowledge of the present "helps to understand what the past could have been, since History is also the relationship between past and present and, also, what, in the present is inherited from the past".[118] Therefore, the contrast with official history that film can portray as well as its link to the *commonsensical* aspects of popular history lead us to rethink the potential of the historical film in –using Landy's words– "examining the persistence of the past" and "rejuvenating" it.

Pierre Sorlin, another important critic of historical cinema, considers films to be socio-historical documents that illustrate how people understand their age, and also as "a source of knowledge, information and entertainment".[119] For this reason, Sor-

110] Landy, Marcia 1997, *Cinematic Uses of the Past*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, p. 1.
111] Ibid., p. 4.
112] Landy, Marcia, 'Introduction', in Landy, Marcia (ed.) 2001, p. 6.
113] Ibid., p. 7.
114] Landy, Marcia 1997, p. 5.
115] Interview with Ferro, Marc 2009, available in: http://www.reporterodelahistoria.com/2009/12/marc-ferro-el-cine-es-una.html#.VCgwoedFGoY (Translated by the author.)
116] Ferro, Marc 2005, 'La Historia en el Cine', available in: http://www.aleph.org.mx/jspui/bitstream/56789/8141/1/DOCT2065560_ARTICULO_1.pdf, p. 8. (Translated by the author.)
117] Ferro, Marc 2009.
118] Ferro, Marc 2005, p. 8.
119] Sorlin, Pierre, 'How to Look at an "Historical" Film', in Landy, Marcia (ed.) 2001, p. 25.

lin exposes how the audio-visual medium introduces certain elements that modify the traditional practice of historians. Among them, he notes that, contrary to other sources or data, movies are documents that are no longer exclusively in the expert's hands –everyone can access them. Thus, the duty of the historian is not simply to provide public access to unknown sources anymore. Instead, the historian must use documents that are known and available, coping with the audio-visual world in order to interact and affect a wider social level.[120] This shift calls to re-evaluate the importance of cinema among historians, as a medium full of potential for studying the vanished past that gives it a meaning in today's eyes, forming the historical sense of audiences increasingly influenced by the audio-visual media. This also serves to underline the limitations of the historical text in portraying the past according to the objective aims of the positivist tradition, questioning the traditional methods and forms of representation. As Rosenstone notes, incorporating contemporary forms of representation –of which cinema is just one of them– might serve to connect with the contemporary sensibility and "bring the practice of history ... into the twenty-first century".[121]

We could argue that this positive recognition of cinema's potential echoes Benjamin's dissent from Adorno's negative evaluation of film. Adorno considered cinema an alienating spectacle made for profit "of considerable instrumental and economic value to the ruling class ... [that] enslaved viewers mentally",[122] an infantilising medium with a special capacity to mimic reality due to its technical development, capable of expanding the sense of illusion and reducing the space for critical thinking. On the other hand, Benjamin understood that film could extend our world in a liberating way, as the mysteries of ordinary life might be probed "through its mediation and through the opportunity given us for reflection".[123] As part of an integral vision of the need for changes in the forms of contemporary cultural production, he criticised bourgeois literature in terms that could apply to other fields –as those under study in here– when he wrote "we must rethink the notions of literary forms or genres if we are to find forms appropriate to the literary energy of our time".[124] Benjamin's view of cinema was in tune with this hopeful understanding of the demystification of culture, which should favour the familiarity of audiences to new forms of art born in an age of technical reproducibility. This shift should positively threaten the sacred position of the arts, its uniqueness and its *aura*. As Esther Leslie asserts, for Benjamin film was the cultural product that exemplified this change at its best:

120] Ibid., p. 26.
121] Rosenstone, Robert 2006, *History on Film/Film on History*, Harlow: Pearson, p. 3.
122] Leslie, Esther, 'Adorno, Benjamin, Brecht and Film', in Wayne, Mike (ed.) 2005, *Understanding Film. Marxist Perspectives*, London and Ann Arbor: Pluto Press, p. 34.
123] Ibid., p. 41.
124] Benjamin, Walter 1998, *Understanding Brecht*, translated by Anna Bostock, London and New York: Verso, p. 89.

> "In the cinema audiences engage energetically with what was on show. They were no longer in awe before it. They discussed it and criticised it, in ways that they might not discuss a novel or an artwork".[125]

And so Leslie continues:

> "[Film] not only meets the viewer halfway in terms of coming into the orbit of the viewer, it also allows its meaning to be appropriated more quickly. It allows this because it speaks a language that is familiar already to its viewers".[126]

Benjamin's reflections on the medium serve to underscore the importance that most studies on the historical film give to cinema in building our contemporary historical thinking and public memory, especially in relation to written history and the deterministic positions that dominant historiography can embrace.

Nevertheless, there is another key factor that distinguishes both mediums: the experience of each of them. Exposed at 24 frames per second, the film narrative gives little space for conscious reflection compared to the written narrative. This aspect carries an obstacle inherent within the experience. Analysing the message and its sources, contrasting the findings and evaluating its position in the historical debates on the topic become a lot more difficult. The experience of reading written texts is directly connected to a rational act, while the reception of moving images calls for an instinctive decoding process where biological mechanisms of visual perception are involved. This aspect –essential for any study dealing with the medium, very particularly since mainstream dramas emphasise the importance of emotion as narrative mechanisms– is essential to understanding the scepticism towards film and its capacity to mould our thinking.

As a response to these concerns, Rosenstone asserts that the central question is not whether film can contain such complexity, but what film can add to the area of historical studies. In other words, if the film representation of history –which White calls historio*photy*– is capable of *making history* as the written historiographical narrative does, without losing content while conveying a significant critical magnitude.[127] This demands a different approach from historians towards film, to understand its specific characteristics and judge it according to its standards.[128] Thus, for example, the emphasis on emotion over analysis and empiricism, so common to the audio-visual forms of representation, necessarily modifies our sense of history.

In combination with the popularity of the medium, this serves to shape the formation of public memory. For all these reasons, Rosenstone believes that film

125] Leslie, Esther, in Wayne, Mike (ed.) 2005, p. 46.
126] Ibid.
127] Rosenstone, Robert 1988, pp. 1177-1178, and White, Hayden 1988, p. 1193.
128] Rosenstone, Robert 1988, pp. 1180-1181.

should be understood as a challenge for historians. Combined with written and oral history, film can serve to question and liberate from the literary tradition,[129] even if its place in the realm of historical debates is yet uncertain. And for him, this challenge of the audio-visual to the written word, as the written word previously challenged the oral tradition, can open the debates on the diversity of historical *truths*. By accruing other forms of narrative representation and facing established assumptions and conventions, the "audio-visual truths" can add something different to the "written truths", as a complement and without being necessarily in conflict.[130] The historical film then can be another type of narrative that provides meaning to the past, but affecting our historical thinking in a very powerful way. Knowing its potential and its limitations, as with any form of historical representation, is critical to accepting its communicative and cognitive impact. Many have rightly observed that film might seem closer to the oral tradition of narrative. But as Rosenstone notes, we live in times when literacy has been present for very long, shaping our forms of representation profoundly and affecting our scientific demands of accuracy. Therefore, it is necessary to request that the historical film be attuned to the known meanings of the past, as well as the *truths* and judgements accumulated within the historical knowledge that is addressing.[131]

We can ponder these reflections in connection with the *commonsensical* and popular characteristics that Landy attributes to cinema, as they can serve to confront the "monolithic, messianic and deterministic views towards the past" of traditional historiography. For this purpose, we must explore how these other narrative forms can construct history and build our *conceptions of the world* and also what interests operate behind "the right standard of significance" when forming the tales of the past that affect our historical thinking. Every form of historical representation –oral, written and filmed– contains particular elements, but they all share something: they are never innocent, neutral or objective. On the contrary, as interested, ideologically motivated and traditionally shaped by the rulers, Landy suggests that they "deserve to be challenged as well as reexamined so that different conceptions of social and cultural change may be developed".[132] Rethinking the historical film can play an important part in this process, due to its very *commonsensical* and popular aspects. For projects related to the subaltern, it is essential to reformulate the established narrative formulas of history, such as the biopic genre, in order to transform them into types of representation capable of "seizing hold of memory" of the subjects marginalised by the official history.

129] Rosenstone, Robert, in Landy, Marcia (ed.) 2001, p. 65.
130] Ibid.
131] Ibid., pp. 65-66.
132] Landy, Marcia, in Landy, Marcia (ed.) 2001, p. 2.

INVENTION, ACCURACY AND VERISIMILITUDE

As a link to fictional narratives, inventions are the most controversial aspect of historical films regarding their accuracy. Nevertheless, inventions are crucial "to understanding history as drama".[133] As Rosenstone asserts:

> "[I]nvention is inevitable for a variety of reasons –to keep the story moving, to maintain intensity of feeling, to simplify complexity of events into plausible dramatic structure that will fit within filmic time constraints".[134]

And so he concludes that "[o]n the screen, history must be fictional in order to be true!"[135]

For this reason, the accuracy of historical films offers constant polemics, often discussed on various levels, which explicitly refer to the public debate about the role of cinema in affecting our historical thinking. The criticism regarding how precise and verifiable films can be as historical documents is at the core of the scepticism of the validity of the medium to represent history in its full complexity. We can understand the inquiries about accuracy in connection with the debates in history and journalism on the ideological foundations of the claims of neutrality and equidistance. As George Custen, one of the preeminent authors who has dealt in depth with the biographical film, warns:

> "To address history from the point of view of "accuracy" alone is to accept that such a condition exists, and that it is disinterested, rather than ideologically motivated".[136]

As for the historical narrative as a construction of the past in general and the dramatic qualities of the historical film in particular, we can mediate upon the reflections of Bruner on "narrative necessity" and "verisimilitude", when he asserts that, realism being a literary convention, "[n]arrative "truth" is judged by its verisimilitude rather than its verifiability".[137] But what does verisimilitude mean within the context of the historical narrative, considering the historical film as one of its forms? And is *being accurate* the main aim of creating a historical film?

Due to the shift of medium causing a transformation of the historical message, Rosenstone suggests that different criteria should be applied when approaching the value of film within the realm of historical studies. And thus he claims that, even if some filmmakers can be labelled as historians, the different rules that apply to filmmaking and to written history define the distinct nature of their work.

133] Rosenstone, Robert, in Landy, Marcia (ed.) 2001, p. 60.
134] Ibid., p. 61.
135] Ibid.
136] Custen, George F. 1992, *Bio/Pics. How Hollywood Constructed Public History*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, p. 11.
137] Bruner, Jerome 1991, p. 13.

For example, due to their strong bonds with dramaturgy, dramatic films –being the dominant and most popular form of film production–, do not simply select data and organise narrative patterns, but often create facts and compose characters or plots to fulfil their dramatic goals.

Thus, the audio-visual serves to expose the past from a more symbolic rather than literal perspective, in a more synthetic way than written historiography. Rosenstone considers films better at suggesting meanings of past events than at describing them faithfully, stimulating the curiosity of the spectator to learn about the topics projected on the silver screen. What is then the role of its inventions in making a film *historical*? Rosenstone believes a film is historical due to its commitment to the ongoing discussions on the topic it deals with. Consequently, it is a must for "its inventions [to] engage the historical discourse surrounding the film's subject".[138] Inventions then work in the general sense of the past they transmit, highlighting historical traces, not necessarily meant to point at the verifiability of the facts, but at its verisimilitude within the theme and dramatic context of the film. Because of their metaphoric value, they can challenge the traditional historical discourse and develop a "new form of historical thinking".[139] The necessity for dramatic inventions in films can be a useful and powerful tool to face hegemonic and established notions about the past inherited from the official written historiography.

In this regard, the notion of verisimilitude of historical and biographical films is central to and constantly debated by those judging these productions, from scholars to critics and spectators. Verisimilitude calls for "the degree of truth" –Custen's phrase– between the actual historical figure and/or events pictured in the film and the narrative elaborated around them. As an aspect shared by the audience, we can consider its relevance as an *intersubjective* value, as it serves to install in the public a conception of the figure and/or events that becomes *commonsensical*, assumed collectively as *truth*.

As Finnish scholar Anneli Lehtisalo notes, film and media professor Steve Neale acknowledged two different types of verisimilitude to fulfil expectations regarding the plausibility of dramatic films. On one hand, generic verisimilitude reflects the use of the respective genre's codes in order to make the film acceptable and believable within its generic realm. On the other hand, what we could call social and cultural verisimilitude articulates the social and cultural understanding of what the general public considers to be *true* in the text.[140] Both types cohabit in a film, though sometimes developing tensions and contradictions between them, as certain genres are more *pure* and extreme in going beyond the social and cultural conventions of verisimilitude –Lehtisalo points out, for example, the case of fantasy and horror films. As for historical and biographical films, cultural verisimilitude is the main type of verisimilitude governing them. But as Lehtisalo notes,

138] Rosenstone, Robert, in Landy, Marcia (ed.) 2001, p. 63.
139] Rosenstone, Robert 2006, p. 9.
140] Lehtisalo, Anneli 2011, 'As if Alive before Us: the Pleasures of Verisimilitude in Biographical Fiction Films', *New Readings*, 11, p. 101.

> "generic regimes of verisimilitude overlap with these cultural regimes: a film is recognised as biographical film if it is considered to have references to the real world".[141]

Historical and biographical films are mostly hybrids of different genres, less *pure* than other genres. Therefore, the balance between the different types of verisimilitude can shift, thus affecting its plausibility. Neale proposed that often audiences feel attracted to films when they identify generic codes. This suggests a link between generic verisimilitude and pleasure, an element that is critical to sustaining the value of film production as spectacle. But considering that fact and fiction have been traditionally understood as opposites, Lehtisalo emphasises that analysing "cultural verisimilitude as a source of entertainment and enjoyment"[142] can serve to stimulate discussions about the characteristics of genres such as the historical and biographical film. And thus, she concludes:

> "If cultural verisimilitude defines the genre of the biographical film, if it is a genre in which generic and cultural verisimilitude overlap, then cultural verisimilitude is a generic feature that could be seen as a source of pleasure".[143]

In these genres, it is the balance between the different types of verisimilitude and their level of authenticity that leads to the area of recognition where the audience's pleasure rests, despite the creative inventions that the dramatic narrative form of the medium demands. Lehtisalo understands that this social and cultural negotiation between the spectator and a film dealing with a *known* collective past –the intimacy between the spectator and the characters on the screen, and the exploration of a vanished but real world– are among the main reasons why the pleasure of verisimilitude makes the historical film in general, and the biopic in particular, especially appealing. These aspects expand upon the potential of the medium. But, for these very reasons, as these genres and their dominant dramatic codes are so linked to character identification, we could argue that both the historical film and particularly the biopic have been genres open to various types of exploitations and thus often received with suspicion.

THE BIOPIC AS A FORM OF HISTORICAL REPRESENTATION

Making history is also giving meaning to past events. Facts by themselves do not necessarily explain what gives meaning to a life. Even if we often relate inventions just to fictive narrative forms, both facts and fiction meet to give coherence to a

141] Ibid.
142] Ibid., p. 102.
143] Ibid.

life in the composite of a biography. Lives that are told are different than lives that are lived, and for this reason biographies use all types of narrative techniques to provide meaning to a life and represent the portrayed person as a protagonist of history. Nevertheless, aspects explored above that affect the historical film's credibility, such as its use of emotionally exploitative devices, verisimilitude and inventions, are even more polemical in the case of the biopic, because the genre focuses on the role of the individual in *making history*. For a study aiming at the transformation of the genre and interested in the representations of the subaltern, it is necessary to tackle the characteristics of the biographical film as a form of historical representation.

Therefore, as building historical narratives based on the achievements of individuals instead of the role of the masses that have led to social change is certainly problematic, this issue has been debated in multiple forms of historical representation. In a work as relevant for the literature of the subaltern as *The Black Jacobins*, the Afro-Trinidadian historian and essayist C. L. R. James, for example, reflected on the narrative's difficulty with illustrating the complexity of the Haitian Revolution while at the same time focusing on the leadership of Toussaint L'Ouverture:

> "By a phenomenon often observed, the individual leadership responsible for this unique achievement was almost entirely the work of a single man –Toussaint L'Ouverture. ... The history of the San Domingo revolution will therefore largely be a record of his achievements and his political personality. ... Yet Toussaint did not make the revolution. It was the revolution that made Toussaint. And even that is not the whole truth".[144]

Robert Brent Toplin, author of several books on the portray of history in American films, identifies a series of problems with historical films commonly discussed by audiences: the representation of specific events instead of bigger ideas or wider analysis, their often incomprehensive and poorly elaborated explanation of the past, their focus on single views of history instead of multi-layered perspectives, and, in the case of Hollywood, their emphasis on war stories. Toplin, who praises the filmmakers' contributions to our historical thinking through the emotional experience of films, underlines that one of the major controversies of Hollywood historical films is their focus on telling history through the figure of the "great person".[145] Mainstream dramatic films often follow the Aristotelian dramaturgical model, based on mimesis of reality, the importance of action and plot, and a tendency to favour linear structures meant to result in the catharsis that brings the *affective recognition* in the audience, sustaining the illusion of drama. Thus, the issue of identifying history with the enterprise of individual great men is particularly relevant for the major form of the historical film: the biographical film, biofilm or biopic.

144] James, C.L.R. 1989, *The Black Jacobins*, New York: Vintage Books, pp. IX-X.
145] Toplin, Robert Brent, 'In Defense of the Filmmakers', in Francaviglia, Richard and Rodnitzky, Jerry (ed.) 2007, *Lights, Camera, History. Portraying the Past in Film*, College Station: Texas A&M University Press. Ebook version.

Just as written historiography shares links with the historical film, literary biographies and biographical films also share quite a bit of common ground. Regarding the comparison between both as forms of representation that take the story of an individual and place it at the centre of history for admiration, contempt or both, some complain that the biopic often lacks factual information. Nevertheless, Rosenstone questions that facts are the reason why people approach biographies or biographical films.[146] As character identification is a crucial aspect of the genre, it is necessary to underline that this very identification of the audience generates a response that is partly intellectual, but also profoundly emotional due to the particular characteristics of drama and the audio-visual medium. Thus, this response becomes a central argument in favour of the particular historical interpretation of the film's text. And for this reason, controversies regarding how character identification is exploited in the forging of the spectator's historical thinking are often rather disputable.

As the actual life depicted in a biography occurred in a different time and space than the one in paper or on screen, literary scholar and writer Carolyn Heilburn asserts that a biographer "invents a life", by establishing a model using certain selected events and creating a protagonist out of them.[147] And thus, as in any other form of representation, selecting material for that pattern while excluding other data, creating causal relationships between events and highlighting some over others, all these are part of that big invention: the biography. In other words, as the screenwriter of *The King's Speech* (2010) David Seidler joked, while also underlining the dominating Aristotelian values of mainstream drama, "I've noticed, doing a lot of biopics, that people don't have the grace to live their life in a good three-act scenario. They are very messy".[148]

Thus, the concern over the impossibility of literally reproducing a disappeared past is both shared by the historical literary tradition and the historical film. In the 19th century, historical novelist sir Walter Scott already used the term *translation* referring to the craft of bringing a vanished world to modern times, in order to excite the interest of contemporary audiences. This might recall Benjamin's reflections on the "forms appropriate to the literary energy of our time". For Scott, *translation* meant to link past and present by making fiction more real than simple facts, and thus keeping his "historical literature being read *as* literature".[149] The construction of narrative patterns provides audiences with the feeling of being a witness to the past.

Nevertheless, due to the metaphorical and suggestive characteristics of the film medium, for Rosenstone, the biopic appears as a less rigid form for portraying the story of a life than its literary counterpart.[150] And, as interpretations and repre-

146] Rosenstone, Robert, 'In Praise of the Biopic', in in Francaviglia, Richard and Rodnitzky, Jerry (ed.) 2007.
147] Mentioned in ibid.
148] Panel discussion held at Santa Barbara Film Festival 2011, 'It Starts with the Script', available in http://www.lynda.com/2011-sbiff-writers-panel-it-starts-with-the-script/79039-2.html and http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL5B6C971EFC350BF5
149] Waswo, Richard 1980, 'Story as Historiography in the Waverly Novels', *ELH*, 47,2, p. 324.
150] Rosenstone, Robert, in Francaviglia, Richard and Rodnitzky, Jerry (ed.) 2007.

sentations of history are never definitive, it would be pretentious to suggest there can be a definitive biographical portrait of any subject. The dialogue between different mediums, both literary and audio-visual, as well as the appearance of new representations of certain topics, serves to enrich debates in new audiences. We can argue about the existence of a similarity between this concern and Gramsci's reflections on the complex and unstructured formation of folklore as *common sense*, which serves to create social consensus around the *conceptions of the world* we share. Thus, accruing narratives is critical to the development of culture, as well as in the forging of historical thinking and public memory. As Bruner remarked:

> "Narrative accrual is not foundational in the scientist's sense. Yet narratives do accrue, and ... the accruals eventually create something variously called a "culture" or a "history" or, more loosely, a "tradition"".[151]

Rosenstone attempts to trace four categories of biofilm,[152] though recognising the difficulties in using a universal approach to the question of the genre:

- The Hollywood biopic of the studio era.
- The "serious biofilm" of the European film tradition and other parts of the world that has influenced recent Hollywood productions.
- The biographical documentary.
- And the experimental biopic, which tends to confront the traditional forms of linear storytelling.

He considers that the second category might be more appreciated by historians for contributing to their field of study, as these biofilms are supposed to be faithful to their sources, make use of historical consultants and add the smallest portion of invention possible to the story. The proposal for the transformation of the biopic as a genre in this research is directed towards this vague category.

BIOGRAPHIES AS *HISTORICAL ALLEGORIES*

Regarding the controversies explored so far on the representation of history through the biographical genre, we could also address the intricate question through the suggestive concept of *historical allegory*. Brazilian film critic Ismail Xavier underlines the importance that allegory gained after the early 70's, when Benjamin's reflections on modernity were revisited in cultural studies. Xavier understands that, as a central concept to the modern crisis of culture, allegory is linked to "the

151] Bruner, Jerome 1991, p. 18.
152] Rosenstone prefers the term biofilm instead of biopic, as he considers the latter more frivolous.

vicissitudes of human experience in time", thus connected to the continuous shifting of historical processes, which ultimately leads to the "dissolution of meanings". For him allegories, which are often born from interpretative controversies in the struggle for hegemony, by "dissolving meanings", question and challenge "old conceptions" meant to legitimate universal, stable and hegemonic interpretations of the world.[153] Xavier, a specialist in the revolutionary Brazilian film movement Cinema Novo, emphasises the importance of both textual structure and the specificity of the local when dealing with allegories,[154] which he defines as "a privileged signifying practice that brings to light all the ambiguities related to national identity and interests, or related to an omnipresent mediasphere shaping our everyday life".[155]

For Fredric Jameson, *historical allegory*, within his historicist interpretative approach to narrative as a socially symbolic act, introduces an alternative way of dealing with the biographical form of historical representation in connection to the shifting of audiences' values throughout time. Jameson illustrates this with the case of the transformation of the Old Testament into the New Testament, responding to the collective historical dimension of each work. The first portrayed a particular collective whose link to the times had vanished, making its representation strange to the public. On the other hand, the "medieval system" transformed it into an alternative second tale, articulating the original through the biographical form of a great individual –"rewriting the Jewish textual and cultural heritage in a form usable for Gentiles".[156] The Old Testament was preserved, remaining as historical fact, while the New Testament fulfilled "the hidden prophecies and annunciatory signs of the Old"[157] through the narrative of the life of Christ. That helped to open new moral and analogical interpretative levels, which served to insert the individual believer within the analogical apparatus. Jameson concludes:

> "The historical or collective dimension is thus attained once again, by way of the detour of the sacrifice of Christ and the drama of the individual believer; but from the story of a particular earthly people it has been transformed into universal history and the destiny of humankind as a whole".[158]

Landy marks a relevant link between Gramsci's notion of *common sense* and Jameson's allegory in their shared multilayered essence. Allegory appears then as a fragmented view of history that allows the rewriting and rethinking of narratives according to the energy –or popular philosophy– of times.[159] Jameson argues that, even if contemporary culture proves the critical nature of any conceptualisation of any

153] Xavier, Ismail, 'Historical Allegory', in Miller, Toby and Stam, Robert (ed.) 2004, p. 333.
154] Ibid., p. 335.
155] Ibid., p. 360.
156] Jameson, Fredric 1981, *The Political Unconscious. Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act,* London and New York: Routledge, p. 14.
157] Ibid.
158] Ibid., p. 15.
159] Landy, Marcia 1997, p. 8.

historical period, "the larger issue is that of the representation of History itself".[160] As he notes, we could then understand allegory as an interpretative tool to open up "the text to multiple meanings, to successive re-writings and overwritings which are generated as so many levels and as so many supplementary interpretations".[161] It thus allows locked particularities to open and expand their meaning throughout new sensibilities, as a way of addressing the tension between the specific and the local on one hand, and the universal and the mythical on the other. The allegory then works in *two times*, translating narratives into alternative readings of the past adapted to the energy of the new times.

We can consider this aspect in connection with Gramsci's reflections on *common sense* in the struggle for hegemony, and its fragmentary and contradictory formation, or what Xavier calls "the dialectics of fragmentation and totalization" of allegory, presenting it as follows:

> "The traditional conception of allegory as a text to be deciphered implied the idea of an a priori "concealed meaning", a conception that turned the production and reception of allegory into a circular movement composed of two complementary impulses, one of concealing the truth beneath the surface, the other of making the truth emerge again".[162]

Thus, considering biographies as allegorical narrative forms for interpreting the complexities of the collective experience of history is of course a central aspect for dialectically reconceiving of the biopic as a genre. The notion of *historical allegory* acquires a significant dimension for both interpreting and representing, as it involves many of the components needed in any proposal meant to rethink generic codes for their critical re-elaboration.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BIOPIC AS A GENRE

The biopic is a genre that, even if it constitutes a large part of the film productions yearly and has been traditionally closely linked to the Hollywood-based film industry, has not been analysed thoroughly. Dennis Bingham, one of the few authors who has studied it in depth, describes the biopic as a

> "genuine, dynamic genre and an important one ... [that] narrates, exhibits, and celebrates the life of a subject in order to demonstrate, investigate, or question his or her importance in the world; to illuminate the fine points of a personality; and for both artist and spectator to discover what it would

160] Jameson, Fredric 1981, p. 13.
161] Ibid., p. 14.
162] Xavier, Ismail, in Miller, Toby and Stam, Robert (ed.) 2004, p. 343.

> be like to be this person, or to be a certain type of person, or ... to be that person's audience".[163]

Bingham thinks that interest in the genre comes from the positioning of a public figure as a dramatic character. Thus, identifying the author's interpretation of reality and the form chosen to dramatise it are essential elements in attracting audiences. He believes that the main goal of the genre is "to enter the biographical subject into the pantheon of cultural mythology, ... and to show why he or she belongs there".[164]

Long before Bingham, French cultural critic Roland Barthes called the biopic "a fiction that dare not speak its name" transforming people's lives "into the realms of myth".[165] For Barthes, these realms are meant to reinforce the established notion of society, benefiting the ideological grounds of the dominant classes and their media. Therefore, Barthes asserts that "[m]yth hides nothing and flaunts nothing: it distorts".[166] He sees mythologisation as a social forging process that naturalises narratives, concepts and superstitions. These *conceptions of the world* are assumed uncritically within culture, "transform[ing] history into nature".[167] The loss of specificity and lack of dialectical values of the process liberates mythologies of historical complexity:

> "Myth does not deny things ... it purifies them, it makes them innocent, it gives them a natural and eternal justification, it gives them a clarity which is not that of an explanation but that of a statement of fact. ... In passing from history to nature, myth acts economically: it abolishes the complexity of human acts, it gives them the simplicity of essences, it does away with all dialectics, with any going back beyond what is immediately visible, it organizes a world which is without contradictions because it is without depth, a world wide open and wallowing in the evident, it establishes a blissful clarity: things appear to mean something by themselves".[168]

We could argue that Barthes' ideas on myth share certain critical notions with those introduced by the Frankfurt School and especially Adorno in his study of the *culture industries*. It is necessary to emphasise that another member of the Frankfurt School, sociologist Leo Löwenthal, also takes a negative approach to myth and the *culture industries* in his scholarship on the modern biography.

George Custen is the author of one of the other few seminal works on the biographical film: *Bio/Pics: How Hollywood Constructed Public History*, which covers only the biopics made in Hollywood up until 1960. Custen based much of his analy-

163] Bingham, Dennis 2010, *Whose Lives are They Anyway? The Biopic as Contemporary Film Genre*, New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, p. 10.
164] Ibid.
165] Quoted in Rosenstone, Robert, in Francaviglia, Richard and Rodnitzky, Jerry (ed.) 2007.
166] Barthes, Roland 1991, *Mythologies*, translated by Annette Lavers, New York: The Noonday Press, p. 128.
167] Ibid.
168] Ibid., p. 143.

sis of biographical cinema on Löwenthal's work regarding popular biographical literature within the mass culture industry. Löwenthal underscored that, while at the beginning of the 20th century popular biographies focused on the "idols of production" –those related to industry, military and other ruling elites–, after the Second World War the focus shifted towards what he called "idols of consumption" –those affirming the values of a consumerist society, where owning properties or displaying a glamorous appearance ranks ahead of "making the world".[169] He observed that most of the popular biographies he researched either mystified the past for ideological purposes –mainly those he studied from Germany– or treated historical data frivolously –mainly those from the US. This deformed human nature, and he considered this as "the destruction of the individual". The objective was to ideologically insert the individual into the culture industry of a consumerist bourgeois society in its phase of transformation into a totalitarian one.[170] In other words, the "idol of consumption", its entrance into "the realms of myth", served to naturalise the *culture industries*, legitimating consumerist society through entertainment.

For Löwenthal, this biographical literature, in search of individual answers to social and historical questions, exposes the public to a deformed image of reality. This fake image obstructs comprehension of the complex social relationships that produce historical processes. Or, in terms that remind Adorno's views on cinema, it creates the illusion that the external world is an extension of the spectacle.

Biographies are often presented as tributes to the individual, but for Löwenthal instead this hides its destruction. The mythologisation of the individual is trivialised through repeated patterns of individual achievement and success. But on the other hand, the spectator realises that the impossibility of achieving his own aspirations in a consumerist society based on mass production is evident. Produced by the dominant culture industry, popular biographies keep the aspirations of social recognition alive as an illusion through their form of representation. Every biography ends up being the same one, reproducing the same pattern, where the hero is exchangeable by any other hero of any other biography. Homogenising the individual according to the universal is key part of this process.

This dismissive view on the alienating nature of popular biographical literature influenced Custen's exploration of Hollywood's biopic before 1960, dominated by the star-system and the role of the big studio producers. Custen notices the close bond between the Hollywood industry and the biopic in reducing history to the acts of a few "great men". He attributes an "engaging distortion" to the genre, with a tendency to explain history through individual lives where stardom and fame are of critical importance. Individual greatness is isolated from historical circumstances, reducing social complexities to simple explanations and reinforcing the most basic values of the same capitalist society that produces these hegemonic tales of the past.

169] Custen, George F. 1992, p. 33.
170] See Schneider, Gregor-S 2001, 'La Biografía como Literatura de la Cultura de Masas: Los Análisis de Leo Löwenthal sobre la Industria Cultural', *Constelaciones – Revista de Teoría Crítica*, 3, pp. 179-192.

This is a central ideological aspect for creating and sustaining an instrumental type of public history, given how deeply the historical thinking of audiences is moulded and affected by the biographical film as a form of historical representation. This concern turns problematic when large amounts of spectators understand films as *true* documents of history uncritically. Custen recalls Barthes' reflections on mythologies to realise

> "how decisions were made to produce movies, anecdotal and mythological works bearing the imprint of the story lines of the films themselves functioned as a Hollywood substitute for a more historically grounded set of creation myths".[171]

And thus, regarding the naturalisation of myth, Custen concludes that these films

> "presented a world view that naturalizes certain lives and specific values over alternative ones. ... creat[ing] a view of history that was based on the cosmology of the movie industry; in this world, key historical figures became stars".[172]

Fame and stardom are aspects of the industry that reflected the ideological foundations of the Hollywood biopic. Custen observes that the arrangements of plots, the inventions, substitutions and eliminations of problematic elements contribute to normalising genius, constructing successful heroes to admire, forging consensus around public figures and reinforcing the aspects of *truth* in public history[173] –in other words, forming *common sense* and hegemony. But this "repeated set of myths", as in Löwenthal's analysis, both fascinates and frustrates the individual –its mythical aspirations are impossible to realise, empowering the glittering effect of the movie industry and its function in the social order.[174]

Custen discusses how this was often achieved by normalising the private life of "great men", so that audiences could easily relate to them. They would understand them according to their own experiences, while admiring at the same time their unique contributions, feeling fortunate to benefit from those.[175] To empower the sense of authentic realism and accuracy of these films, the studios used all sort of strategies within them –in the title, through introductory texts or voice overs, etc.–, and outside of them –publicity campaigns, using significant consultants, exposing public statements, etc. This claim to *truth* distinguished the biopic from other genres, proposing *truth* as a *commonsensical* category –as part of the assumptions of knowledge and popular philosophy of the general

171] Custen, George F. 1992, p. 4.
172] Ibid.
173] Ibid., pp. 12-17.
174] Ibid., p. 18.
175] Ibid., p. 19.

public. This would serve to abolish its scientific significance, thus avoiding any profound debate around it.

For Custen, this particular model of picturing for posterity the achievements of a historical life ended with the collapse of the studio system of production, by 1960. This crisis affected the position of producers and stars, and also propelled the role of the director forward. As a result, the filmic narrative forms became widely questioned and challenged, opening the field to influences such as those coming from the Italian and French *auteur* cinema. The change coincided also with a wider social context of revolutionary projects and decolonisation that affected both politics and culture. This influenced the emergence of the subaltern as a study subject and provided an alternative view of the relationship between history and hegemony. The biopics of the studio era had broadly excluded minorities, providing an image of a world dominated by great white men. The crash of this era, in connection with the general social and political panorama, also meant the crash of the genre, which was partly abandoned, as it took "at least two generations ... to catch up with the biopic".[176] While other genres developed largely during the 60's, adjusting "their stance to a new post-war social order, the biopic continued to articulate an ideology of fame that presented a vanished world of values".[177] Many of these values in shaping historical thinking were soon transferred to the emerging format of television, due to its role in mass communication and the large social access to it.[178]

Bingham agrees with Custen in describing most biopics from the studio era as formulaic producer's works, where the role of the director was largely diminished.[179] Even if the historical *truth* of a movie might not depend on its factual verifiability, this type of biopic attempted to acknowledge its *degree of truth* by emphasising repetitive patters where visionary white men overcame every obstacle and transcended time due to their relevant contributions.[180] These aspects affected the low reputation of the genre for so long, as a frivolous, falsifying and mendacious genre that favoured escapism and entertainment over historical knowledge, while pretending to be seen as a *serious* genre.[181]

Nevertheless, the critical views of the genre and its effect on the public sphere are not exclusive to the pre-60's time period. On the contrary, harsh contempt is still often expressed towards it today for various reasons. The words of the daughter of one of the real characters in Martin Scorsese's *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013) are one of many examples of such criticism:

> "You people are dangerous. Your film is a reckless attempt at continuing to pretend that these sorts of schemes are entertaining, even as the country is reeling from yet another round of Wall Street scandals ... This kind of

176] Ibid., p. 29.
177] Ibid.
178] Ibid. Also see Sorlin, Pierre, in Landy, Marcia (ed.), p. 27.
179] Bingham, Dennis 2010, p. 20.
180] Ibid., p. 7.
181] Ibid., p. 11.

> behavior brought America to its knees. And yet you're glorifying it ... Did you think about the cultural message you'd be sending when you decided to make this film? You have successfully aligned yourself with an accomplished criminal, ... exacerbating our national obsession with wealth and status and glorifying greed and psychopathic behavior".[182]

Nevertheless, Bingham proposes a more positive view of the biopic, partly influenced by the renewal of it in recent years. For him, even if the role of fiction in it adds an unavoidable and idealising element, the development of the genre allows us to examine and re-examine how differences among classes, races and genders have been seen across society in different times.[183] He notes that only after the 80's did the biopic experience a new revival as a director's medium, thanks to what is known as the "film school generation" with directors like Scorsese, Francis Ford Coppola, Milos Forman, Bernardo Bertolucci, Roman Polanski, Warren Beatty, Spike Lee, and more recently, Gus Van Sant, Steven Soderbergh and Walter Salles. This change makes Bingham see contemporary biopics as "frequently experimental and formally adventurous, in contrast to the formulaic genres of the present period".[184]

QUESTIONING THE BOUNDARIES OF THE BIOPIC IN REPRESENTING THE SUBALTERN

Custen asserts that movies, as part of the mass media they belong to, reflect "the social order from which they spring".[185] Due to their extensive communicative and cognitive value in shaping their audience's historical thinking and *conceptions of the world*, they are key in constructing public history. This massive moulding of knowledge, where assumptions become *commonsensical truths*, affects how popular history is encoded. And, even if the audience often cannot identify the origin of that knowledge, this serves to forge consensus.[186] As shown above, this can highlight certain negative aspects of the *culture industries* explored by Adorno, Löwenthal and other of their colleagues from the Frankfurt School. But as has been proposed also, we can think about these concerns in connection with Gramsci's views on hegemony, folklore as *common sense* and popular philosophy, as well as Benjamin's interrogation of the subject of history and its memory.

This critical questioning was particularly relevant after the break that occurred in the 60's in the audio-visual medium, as a reflection of the shifts that were taking place in every other social field. This juncture helped both filmmakers and film theorists to reconsider, among other things, the notions established around the different genres as forms of representation, including those of the historical film and the bi-

182] http://www.laweekly.com/informer/2013/12/26/an-open-letter-to-the-makers-of-the-wolf-of-wall-street-and-the-wolf-himself?page=2
183] Bingham, Dennis 2010, p. 17.
184] Ibid., p. 20.
185] Custen, George F. 1992, p. 16.
186] Ibid.

Che: Part One, Steven Soderbergh, 2008.

opic. These new views involved debates on the subject's unity and focus, in tune with notions being discussed within the cultural studies field at that time. As Bingham notes, historical knowledge, subjectivity and coherence within the narrative of lives were interrogated. When the studio system collapsed and its role in legitimating the social order diminished, the focus turned towards the fragmented and contradictory nature of real life, affecting a genre as impure and hybrid as the biopic.[187]

The development of the genre during the last decades leads Bingham to suggest a series of modes that illustrate the biographical representations available nowadays: the melodramatic classical and celebratory form; the realistic melodramas that he calls "warts-and-all"; the works that are in transition from a producer's to a director's medium, such as Scorsese's, Lee's or Stone's works for instance; the "critical and atomization of the subject", as in Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane* (1941); the parody or "anti-biopic –a movie about somebody who doesn't deserve one", as the screenwriters of *Man on the Moon* (1999) described their work; the "minority appropriation", where the subject uses the "conventional mythologizing form that once would have been used to marginalize or stigmatize them", as it is the case of *Malcolm X* (1992); and "the neoclassical biopic", which after the year 2000 "integrates elements of all or most of these".[188]

Considering the case of *Malcolm X* in relation to the subaltern is particularly relevant for the purpose of this research on *minority appropriation* as a contemporary form of biopic, as it brings up one important question:

> "whether it is actually possible for a filmmaker and subject matter that historically were marginalized to take up the classical celebratory form without being assimilated by it".[189]

187] Bingham, Dennis 2010, pp. 26-28.
188] Ibid., pp. 17-18.
189] Ibid., p. 23.

Or, in other words: can the subaltern take over a genre traditionally linked to hegemony such as the biopic, and use it for its own interests without losing its critical identity in the process? Is it possible for a filmmaker to take a marginalised historical subject and use a dominant generic pattern as a vehicle for critical practice? For any study aiming at exploring the subaltern as a historical subject and challenging what it represents for the boundaries of the genre, these are essential inquiries to address, as the literature of the subaltern did with official historicism. Studying the role of official history, its ideological motivations and the importance of revisiting, reinterpreting and confronting the hegemonic historical narratives, is a critical part of facing and challenging established forms of representation and developing alternative ones.

As a form of historical narrative, both interpretation and representation are at the core of debates about the biopic. Due to this, and because in drama the theme conveys the author's "point of view on the subject matter",[190] we could argue that in the biopic there is an intrinsic relationship between the historical interpretation and representation of the subject and the thematic aspects of the drama. Both realms aim to convey the point of view of the author. Thus, in order to transgress and transform the genre, it is important to examine the alternative areas of the interpretation and representation of historical narratives and address history's thematic aspects by exploring the insights of the subaltern.

It is necessary at this point to explore several cultural practices that have faced these questions in depth before: Latin American testimonial literature and Third Cinema. The reason for doing this is not only because they are cultural expressions related to the studies of the subaltern, but also because they are directly linked with Rodolfo Walsh and his period, and thus profoundly influential in many degrees to the script based on his life and work. Finally, an analysis of Spike Lee's *Malcolm X*, as a film that confronted these issues through the form of mainstream drama with a notable impact in terms of the public's reception, will serve as an example to complete a view of the practices that lay the foundation for the *generic transformation* proposal put forth by this research.

190] Letwin, David; Stockdale, Joe and Stockdale, Robin, *The Architecture of Drama*, Lanham, Toronto and Plymouth: The Scarecrow Press, p. XVI.

PART 2

COUNTERHEGEMONIC CULTURAL PRACTICES AND NARRATIVES OF THE SUBALTERN

"The question whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a practical question. Man must prove the truth — i.e. the reality and power, the this-sidedness of his thinking in practice. The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking that is isolated from practice is a purely scholastic *question".*

Karl Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach*

"The truth is unreachable: it's in all the lies, like God".

Tomás Eloy Martínez, *The Perón Novel*

CHAPTER 3

LATIN AMERICAN *TESTIMONIO* AND THE CASE OF RODOLFO WALSH

This chapter deals with Latin American testimonial literature, which can be thought of as a cultural practice that contributes to transgressing narrative forms of representation, embracing the social needs and struggles of subaltern groups. Testimonial literature or *testimonio* aims at giving voice to the Other, thus transforming the subaltern into both the protagonist and main audience of the cultural bastion that had traditionally marginalised it. As a committed and critical practice, *testimonio* emerged as part of a wider agenda for social transformation, and it became one of the major local literary proposals that linked culture and politics within

the revolutionary goals expressed in Latin America during the 60's and 70's. As it dealt with the specificity of the subaltern's reality, it served to shift the subject and protagonist of its narratives. Thus, it opened these to themes of social agents and groups traditionally avoided and hidden in the realm of culture, subverting the conformation and domination of official history. In tune with many of the concerns explored by Gramsci, it interrogated how history is constructed, rocking established paradigms and emphasising the importance of the collective memory of the popular sectors in the forging of an alternative historical narrative. Questioning the role of the intellectual as cultural producer and his organic commitment to revolutionary goals was a central issue of the proposal.

Besides the connections between testimonial literature and Gramsci's notions on the formation of our *conceptions of the world*, one key reason to explore *testimonio* as a practice is related to the fact that Rodolfo Walsh is considered by many to be its father. This is partly due to the publication of *Operation Massacre* (*Operación Masacre*) in 1957 as the first testimonial novel –a compilation of the investigative journalistic notes on the José León Suárez massacre that Walsh had published previously in the magazines Revolución Nacional and Mayoría. His relevance in exploring *testimonio* helps to build an understanding of how this literary practice contributes to a rethinking and problematising of the hegemonic forms of representation, offering alternative approaches to narrative and *historytelling* that are useful for the needs of the subaltern in developing a new *common sense*. We could argue that this exploration also serves to contextualise the period and debates that are central to the main character and themes of the script that constitutes the practical part of this research, as they are interlaced with its artistic aims and proposals. Also the strong bond between *testimonio* and Third Cinema leads to finding common ground between specific literary and film practices that were aimed at subverting the dominant forms of representation within their respective fields. Both cultural activities appeared concurrently in time and space as a result of shared influences and goals. As with Third Cinema, studying the testimonial genre –as a genre that transformed the configuration of literary genres– is useful not just due to its historical roots and values, but mainly for expanding those yet valid today within the current cultural context.

The chapter starts by exploring a series of relevant themes that are shared by testimonial literature and Third Cinema, and are thus key to historicising both practices. Among these are Gramsci's notion of the national-popular and how it appears as a rhetorical tool within the cultural and political context of the period, which was framed by the debates, dilemmas and hopes that the Cuban Revolution opened throughout the region. An examination of aspects such as common culture, language and history of dependence and poverty led to tackling the dual concerns of local issues as well as inter-regional solidarity. The revolutionary agenda of Cuba helped to empower this continental solidarity within what is known as *Our America*, strongly conditioned by the particularities of the Cold War at the time. This is why it is then important to deal with the Latin American cultural field and what was called the Literary Boom, as this was a realm of fruitful debates and polemics on the

role of the intellectual. As we discuss throughout the chapter, in her seminal work *Between the Quill and the Rifle: Debates and Dilemmas of the Revolutionary Writer in Latin America*[191] Argentine scholar Claudia Gilman suggests that this was so due to the influence of revolutionary politics on the matter and the ascendancy of a figure like Che Guevara. The rethinking of the *appropriate forms* of representation became of central concern when those active in politics questioned the legitimacy of cultural activity. These discussions led to the emergence of an *anti-intellectualist* stream, a move linked in some degree to Gramsci's notion about the so-called *organic intellectual*. Two events deepened this crisis: the mistrust that the market generated, especially regarding the novel as the major literary form of the Boom, and the death of Guevara. This *anti-intellectualism* then reached a hegemonic pinnacle within the Latin American cultural field, interrogating established literary forms and their *appropriateness* to the energy of the times. Given this context, it is thus necessary to explore the relevance of testimonial literature's emergence, institutionalisation and main characteristics. And within this realm, we could argue that studying the figure of Walsh, the significance of his work and his contributions to the genre, serves the goals of any artistic proposal aiming at transforming the genre and creating an alternative narrative for the subaltern.

The times that surrounded the appearance of *testimonio* were characterised by a big political convulsion, due to both the revolutionary expectations and the social modernisation that generated new types of cultural audiences, with new habits and interests in cultural consumption. As we will see through Gilman's work, the new printing houses and magazines channelled a new literary production that explored innovative creative paths during the 60's and 70's, thanks to a series of authors that would quickly achieve international recognition. We could argue that an understanding of the inspiration that the Cuban Revolution provoked and its subsequent support of a specific profile of cultural production, strongly linked to the political situation, is critical to approach the role of the writer and intellectual during this period. Their activities within the social order and political commitment were debated. A popular culture that would echo the national identity, during conflictive times demanding liberation in every field, became a seminal element for questioning the function of literature. Historicity was central to the relationship between culture and politics in how it exposed the social complexity of a shifting era in which assumed norms, forms and institutions were problematised and interrogated. It also affected the debates and polemics around the normalisation of literature as a cultural institution, in which testimonial literature was inscribed as a genre. And thus, as in the case of Third Cinema, the notions of realism and the avant-garde became intimately related to the revolutionary goals that dominated those years.

Besides being directly linked to Walsh's work and time, *testimonio* may inspire and enlighten cultural approaches aimed at subverting dominating genres and nar-

191] Gilman, Claudia 2003, *Entre la Pluma y el Fusil: Debates y Dilemas del Escritor Revolucionario en América Latina*, Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI Editores. (All quotations from this publication are the author's translation.)

ratives, as is the case behind the proposal of this research. Even if both testimonial literature and Third Cinema appeared as part of the local Latin American expressions that reflected on the conflicts of the region during the 60's and 70's, their challenge and dialectical approach to established narratives makes their study current and necessary. The resonance of these practices is present today, not as dead heritage for passive observation by antiquarians, but as sources of inspiration for the different movements interested in providing an alternative view for interpreting, representing and understanding the world.

ON THE NATIONAL-POPULAR AND THE *LANGUAGE QUESTION* IN THE REALM OF THE SUBALTERN

We must first cover a series of notions related to Gramsci for a better understanding of the phenomenon of testimonial literature in relation to his study of the subaltern. Gramsci's notion of the national-popular and his reflections on language in connection to hegemony and *common sense* offer a unifying link to the period under study. As these concerns are also shared in Third Cinema, framing these concepts together serves to define certain key values on which the political and cultural streams of the era were based, as well as to understand the emphasis on the particularities and the emergence of the local struggles of the subaltern as national and popular. And even though it might appear as a contradiction, this also helps to clarify the transnational solidarity that dominated the period among the Third World in general, and the Latin American nations and their people in particular.

Professor David Forgacs, who has studied the Gramscian concept of the national-popular as it was commonly used in the progressive realist cultural practices that the Italian Communist Party endorsed in the 40's and 50's, noted how it "became a sort of slogan for forms of art that were rooted both in the national tradition and in popular life".[192] After the 60's, criticism of the national-popular concept emerged within certain Western European Marxist circles: as the categories national and popular seemed to substitute for the categories international and proletarian, some understood it as a reformist declassed Leftist trend that favoured popular-democratic struggles of labour against capital over revolutionary ones. Nevertheless, the national-popular concept influenced other thinkers and movements in the emerging Third World, dominated by the struggles for decolonisation and the increasingly prominent revolutionary movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America. It is within this context that Frantz Fanon's theories on the *colonial mentality* and national culture became relevant, as some kind of translation of certain Gramscian concepts to the colonial and neo-colonial reality, as well as Paulo Freire's adaptation to his own environment of many Gramsci's reflections on pedagogy. As for its influence

192] Forgacs, David, 'National-Popular: Genealogy of a Concept', in During, Simon (ed.) 1999, *The Cultural Studies Reader*, London and New York: Routledge, p. 211.

within Latin America, the notion of the national-popular, as related to hegemony and the counterhegemonic struggles of the subaltern, appears then as an important rhetorical element of the vast dialogues between the political and cultural practices of the 60's and 70's.

Gramsci elaborated the notion of the national-popular when the rising tide of fascism in Italy obstructed any revolutionary hope. As Forgacs explains, he tried to unite in it both the cultural and political sides, which are innately related to one another. Thus, he notes that Gramsci understood that

> "a political strategy based exclusively on the proletariat led by the vanguard party in isolation from other social forces was quite inadequate as a strategy to defeat fascism".[193]

Even if different subaltern forces might base their identity on different material interests, Gramsci saw a strategic need to establish alliances between them in order to elaborate a unified counterhegemonic force for facing the dominant hegemony. The role of the intellectual, as an organic participant in this strategy capable of understanding the particularities of this process, was crucial to the success of this enterprise. For Gramsci, in capitalist societies internationalism as a general tactic had to transcend to

> "a specific tactic which confronts the concrete problems of national life and operates on the basis of the popular forces as they are historically determined".[194]

Thus the notion of the national-popular is linked to hegemony, as it reflects the capacity of specific social groups to surpass their economic class interests and generate consensus. These groups expand their alliances with others that might see their interests in harmony with those of the hegemony. As Forgacs notes, by overcoming the economic bond between class and ideology, Gramsci's understanding of consensus and hegemony gave an expansive relevance to the use of ideology and culture for the purpose of political domination. Nevertheless, in order to secure hegemony, the task of the class –whether bourgeoisie or proletariat– is to make the other groups share their interests –"a *collective will* which is national-popular".[195]

For Gramsci, culture was conceived of as a flexible realm. As an open and shifting field, it materialised ideology and participated in the building of hegemony, changing paradigms, re-orientating the collective will, generating new areas of consensus and thus undermining and overthrowing dominant positions and forming new ones. Connected to *common sense*, ideology, for Gramsci, based on consensus and social uni-

193] Ibid., p. 212.
194] Quoted in ibid.
195] Ibid., p. 213.

versalisation of specific class and material interests shared *intersubjectively*, appears as the fragmented, unformed and spontaneous values and beliefs of the mass in a particular society. Landy has noted that, as the cultural materialisation of *common sense*, folklore is not seen in Gramsci as ahistorical and primitive, but as a result of social dynamics and expressions of hegemony.[196] Folklore is then relevant to understanding the dialectical persistence of past motifs that are present in society and creating consensus around specific interests of the dominant groups. As every cultural form appears as the result of social transformations later controlled by hegemony, and in relation to *common sense* and folklore, the notion of the national-popular became key in the realm of culture, especially in societies where the issue of the subaltern was also central, as was the case in Latin America and the Third World in general. Regarding literature, Gramsci expressed his view that a "new literature" could not be but "historical, political and popular" and work with "what already exists", sinking "its roots in the humus of popular culture".[197] Gramsci thus offered a dialectical position between the established and the new for developing an alternative culture to the hegemonic forms of representation, where the masses could recognise themselves, successful and efficient for the benefit of the excluded subaltern.

Gramsci, who considered the *language question* as a political issue and integral to institutionalising, educating and forming peoples' systems of beliefs,[198] also studied language as part of the configuration of the national-popular. Language is the main symbolic cultural tool for coding intellectual meaning, and thus it appears as a fundamental aspect for constructing social thought. As Forgacs notes, Gramsci reflected on the unification of language as applied to the national case of Italy and the possibilities of convergence in a unified struggle between the industrial north and the peasant south.

On the other hand, for Landy, the relevance of the *language question* among Third World intellectuals appears "as a fundamental aspect of cultural, class, and racial oppression and of potential liberation".[199] As it is an important aspect of everyday and practical life that legitimates existing conditions and institutions, Gramsci observed how language also serves to marginalise subaltern groups' access to higher education or culture. This helps to form and impose hegemonic *conceptions of the world* among the subaltern, accommodating its relation to folklore and *common sense* in a conformist manner. Language allows people to act in their practical life, interacting intellectually with their social context, and so its use forges culture. But as Landy notes, for Gramsci, language must be contextualised according to its specific usage, as it is its diversity that forms culture itself, "differentiated across regional, class, and gender lines".[200] Thus, Gramsci applied historicism to language

196] Landy, Marcia 1997, *Cinematic Uses of the Past*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, p. 4.
197] Quoted in Forgacs, David, in During, Simon (ed.) 1999, p. 217.
198] For an in-depth study of language in Gramsci, see Ives, Peter 2004, *Language and Hegemony in Gramsci*, London, Ann Arbor and Winnipeg: Pluto Press and Fernwood Publishing.
199] Landy refers here to the work of Senegalese filmmaker and writer Ousmane Sembène. Landy, Marcia 1994, *Film, Politics, and Gramsci*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, p. 19-20.
200] Ibid., p. 27.

too, and then the tension between the universal and the specific appeared as a practical issue that could not be addressed through deterministic and rigid systems of language analysis.

The common Spanish language shared by most of the Latin American countries –we could also argue about the proximity of the Portuguese language in the case of Brazil– served to reinforce a unifying idea of the region, based on its common history of colonial exploitation and segregation. This is a key issue regarding *testimonio* as it is a cultural practice proposed to give voice to the Other, those historically illiterate classes excluded from the bastion of high culture and academia. The notion of oral culture as a flexible unstructured medium related to memory, in opposition to the written word as a rigid tool linked to official history, is an aspect that is foundational to Latin American testimonial literature's agenda. As Forgacs asserts, the

> "'[n]ational-popular' designates not a cultural content but ... the possibility of an alliance of interests and feelings between different social agents which varies according to the structure of each national society".[201]

For Gramsci, the standardisation of language was critical to the struggle of counterhegemonic forces. Culture must deal with language in ways that allow the national and popular to be reflected, adapting and including the different cultural positions of the subaltern classes and groups, so these can modify their paradigms and identify their interests in the struggle. The relevance of language for the case of the Latin American cultural family of the period is especially significant, as it operated with a double function, for both the national and the transnational. On one hand, the cultural practices being studied here turned their gaze towards the subaltern and the popular forms of expression to develop a language attuned with the feeling of the national. This was a way to bring forward the difference of the local, presenting a counterhegemonic practice to identify the interests of the people as a subaltern category and confront the dominating *conceptions of the world*. Language was an essential vehicle for this purpose, especially in the realm of literature. On the other hand, for Latin America, language also served as a major tool for transgressing the local and developing a particular type of transnational solidarity within the continent.

The contributions of Gramsci to this realm were particularly relevant to the writings of Frantz Fanon, one of the intellectuals whose work was widely influential during these times. Praised by Jean-Paul Sartre in the Preface of his seminal work *The Wretched of the Earth,*[202] Fanon was particularly specific about examining national culture as part of the revolutionary process of decolonisation, an aspect he described as follows:

201] Forgacs, David, in During, Simon (ed.) 1999, p. 217.

202] Sartre wrote on Fanon: "For the only true culture is that of the Revolution; that is to say, it is constantly in the making. Fanon speaks out loud". Sartre, Jean-Paul, 'Preface', in Fanon, Frantz 1963, *The Wretched of the Earth*, translated by Constance Farrington, New York: Grove Press, p. 12.

> "A national culture is the whole body of efforts made by a people in the sphere of thought to describe, justify, and praise the action through which that people has created itself and keeps itself in existence".[203]

In harmony with Gramsci's ideas on cultural hegemony and the leap from *common sense* to *good sense*, Fanon viewed the cultural development of colonised people by three different stages: assimilation of the occupying power's culture; the disruption that leads the native to remember, identify and reinterpret memories and legends; and the "fighting phase" that "shake[s] the people". The latter becomes "an awakener of the people", producing "a fighting literature, a revolutionary literature, and a national literature". And thus, Fanon understood that in this phase

> "men and women who up till then would never have thought of producing a literary work ... feel the need to speak to their nation ... to become the mouthpiece of a new reality in action".[204]

Revolution, which appeared in this scheme as the highest cultural expression, could not avoid national culture within the process of emancipation. Fanon explored the relevance of this even if he understood that paradoxically national culture might also limit revolutionary efforts, due to its traditional link to the hegemonic idea of a nation proceeding from the dominant classes. In this regard, we could argue that his thoughts and call for action brought Gramsci's shift from *common sense* to *good sense* to the question of colonial culture and mentality. And thus, Fanon asserted that "[t]he poverty of the people, national oppression and the inhibition of culture are one and the same thing". And so he continued:

> "It is national liberation which leads the nation to play its part on the stage of history. It is at the heart of national consciousness that international consciousness lives and grows. And this two-fold emerging is ultimately the source of all culture".[205]

Recognising the importance of all these aspects in the Latin American context and in connection with the struggles of the subaltern in the Third World is critical, as they underscore the importance of civil society in the struggle for hegemony. And this is something that, as Forgacs notes, can be "common to more than one social class, fraction or group which can be strategically linked together", not only due to their "economic or ideological self-interest but also in terms of shared interests".[206]

The notion of the national-popular appears then as a seminal issue for understanding the connection between political goals and the cultural practices of those

203] Fanon, Frantz 1963, p. 233.
204] Ibid., pp. 178-179
205] Ibid., pp. 247-248.
206] Forgacs, David, in During, Simon (ed.) 1999, p. 219.

proposals under study here, as is the case with the work of Rodolfo Walsh. These often worked in conjunction with counterhegemonic and revolutionary movements for emancipation and social change in historically dependent regions. We could argue that the importance of the concept is directly bound to a series of characteristics that both Latin American testimonial literature and Third Cinema explored at a practical level: the significance of the specificity of national aspects and their historicity in an integral approach to both culture and politics. Nevertheless, besides the historical period and practices that frame this research, these are questions that remain present when dealing with current inquiries on the forms of interpreting and representing history for and/or from the subaltern.

ON REVOLUTIONARY TIMES AND CUBA

In order to deal fully with the cultural, social and political context of the 60's and 70's in Latin America, we need to briefly *historicise* it within a wider program of social change. Historicising *testimonio* may also serve to clarify links between many of the aspects it shared with Third Cinema, due to their notably common grounds and goals.

As determined by the Cold War and the tensions between the centres of power of the two blocs and those regions under their respective domination, a constant worldwide convulsion favoured the emergence of the Third World as a political agent. The Third World, labelled after China's initiative at the Bandung Conference of 1955 that gave birth to the Non-Aligned Movement, became crucial for the succession of historical events during the 60's and 70's. The term referred originally to the developing countries from Asia, Africa and Latin America that would not fit the standards of the First World –the capitalist West under the hegemony of the US– or the Second World –the socialist bloc under the hegemony of the USSR. Thus, the colonial resonances present in the Vietnamese or Algerian wars, for instance, or the decolonisation of the majority of Africa, exemplified how the subaltern peripheral regions sought their emancipation, demanding recognition of their sovereignty and a new social order. Latin America, traditionally under control of Western powers since Spanish and Portuguese colonial domination, progressively fell under the US's sphere of influence since the 19th century, and, after the Monroe Doctrine of 1823, the region was considered "America's backyard".[207] The tense peace between the US and the USSR of the Cold War, based on the separation of their respective areas of domination, emphasised this aspect.

Within a region of great inequality, segregation and a history of external control, expressions of resistance and claims for sovereignty had been common and continuous throughout the times. Thus, the memory of the *Libertadores*' enterprise had been kept alive widely. In Cuba, the intellectual and revolutionary leader of

207] See Livingstone, Grace 2009, America's Backyard: The United States and Latin America from the Monroe Doctrine to the War on Terror, London and New York: Zed Books and Latin America Bureau.

José Martí Memorial in Havana.

the 19th century, José Martí, wrote vastly on the need to create a transnational Latin American political entity to fight the hegemony of external powers. Martí had coined the term *Nuestra América* (*Our America*) in an essay of the same name to call for the unity of Latin American people, their history and culture for their definitive emancipation.[208] The title suggested also a counterhegemonic opposition to the appropriation of the name by the Anglo-Saxon Americans of the North. In his text, Martí observed how the decayed Spanish empire was not a threat anymore, but instead how the rivalry of the European powers and the incoming hegemony represented by the US comprised the real threat to Latin America.[209]

The work of Martí as an anti-imperialist pioneer was profoundly influential on the political awakening occurring during revolutionary times in Cuba. In harmony with the relevance of other authors dealing with the subaltern and the sympathy the Cuban Revolution had earned, he also became an essential figure on other parts of the continent. We can discuss how his views were reflected, even if from varied perspectives, in works such as *History of the Latin American Nation* (*Historia de la Nación Latinoamericana*) by Argentine historian and politician Jorge Abelardo Ramos or *The Open Veins of Latin* America (*Las Venas Abiertas de América Latina*) by Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano, among many others. *Our America*, united by its history, culture and language saw in the triumph of the Cuban Revolution

208] Martí, José 2007, *Nuestra América*, Barcelona: Linkgua Ediciones.

209] To those who rallied for an alliance with the US to remove Spanish dominance, Martí argued: "Once the United States is in Cuba, who will drive it out?" Quoted in Forner, Phillip S., 'Introduction', in Forner, Phillip S. (ed.) 1975, *Inside the Monster: Writings on the United States and American Imperialism by José Martí*, New York: Monthly Review Press, p. 45. See also Benjamin, Jules R. 1990, *The United States and the Origins of the Cuban Revolution. An Empire of Liberty in an Age of National Liberation*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, and Estrade, Paul 2000, *José Martí: Los Fundamentos de la Democracia en Latinoamérica*, Madrid: Doce Calles.

a point of encounter for counterhegemonic struggles. Cuba further empowered these sentiments by organising events like the Tricontinental Conference in 1966 and establishing the Organisation of Solidarity with the People of Asia, Africa and Latin America (OSPAAAL) for promoting socialism in the Third World, attracting the attention of an entire new generation aiming for social change.

Two major cultural institutions were established in Cuba only a few months after the revolutionary triumph. These became symbols of the epoch as unavoidable meeting points for a wide variety of cultural debates, streams and proposals that shared a critical view of the social issues occurring in the region, many also sharing a revolutionary tendency or at least sympathetic towards the cause. On one hand, Casa de las Américas (House of the Americas) was dedicated to the cultural exchange within Latin America –as well as with other parts of the world, mainly in the Third World–, stimulating artistic production and investigation, especially in literature. Under the roof of the *house*, an entire *family* was congregated: the cultural family of Latin American writers and intellectuals with common concerns of social emancipation and the subaltern. On the other hand, the Cuban Film Institute ICAIC practiced an equivalent role in the field of filmmaking, making possible the appearance of what became known as the New Latin American Cinema, of which Third Cinema was part.

THE LATIN AMERICAN LITERARY BOOM, THE INTELLECTUAL AND CHE GUEVARA

The search for specific forms and aesthetics compatible with the ideological values that characterised the times, as well as the accrual of conflicts and advents of revolutionary projects inspired by the Cuban guerrilla struggle, made politics increasingly central to legitimate the intellectual activity and cultural practices in Latin America. Thus, these started to act "*as if* they were freer" than they had ever been told.

Claudia Gilman has studied in depth the case of Latin American literature and the intellectual scene in relation to the revolutionary agenda of this epoch in her key work *Between the Quill and the Rifle...* Gilman exposes that the transformation of the writer into intellectual played a critical part in linking the distinct areas of culture and politics, and participating in the debates and polemics of both.[210] Once

210] Regarding the figure of the intellectual, Gilman uses as one of her main references Pierre Bourdieu's theory on the *intellectual field* of production as the main space for aesthetical-political conflicts. See *Bourdieu,* Pierre 1969, *'Intellectual Field and Creative Project'*, *Social Science Information*, 8, pp. 89-119, and Bourdieu, Pierre 1977, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Bourdieu deals with the *intellectual field* to address the question of the exclusive social role of the intellectual to produce representations of the social world for public debate. Gilman notes that Bourdieu saw the *intellectual field* as an open space for the struggle of alternative views between the different intellectual groups that fight for defending their *cultural capital* –and thus, for a hegemonic position. Even if containing notable differences with Gramsci, mainly regarding the notion of the *organic intellectual*, we can examine Bourdieu's link to Gramsci's view on the social role of the intellectual in generating the notions for discussion in society that favour hegemony through *common sense*. Regarding these links, see Swartz, David 2013, *Symbolic Power, Politics, and Intellectuals. The Political Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*, Chicago and London: University Of Chicago Press, pp. 169-170, and Adamson, Walter L. 1985, *Marx and the Disillusionment of Marxism*, Berkley: University of California Press, pp. 218-219. For a comparison between Gramsci's *common sense* and Bourdieu's *habitus* see Crehan, Kate 2011, 'Gramsci's concept of common sense: a useful concept for anthropologists?', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 16, 2, pp. 273-287.

Latin American literature reached the highest level of international visibility, this helped to build a new narrative tradition that was called the Latin American Boom. The phenomenon took place after the successful release of works by authors such as Gabriel García Márquez, Julio Cortázar, Carlos Fuentes, Mario Vargas Llosa, Juan Rulfo or Augusto Roa Bastos. These surpassed the traditional marginality of Latin America in the literary world and its market. Rodolfo Walsh, already known for his first testimonial novel and other works, belonged to this generation, and after publishing two successful books of short stories, started to receive a salary to write a novel, which was the emblematic form of the Boom.[211]

In spite of the diverse and varied authors involved in the Boom, they all originally aimed at breaking with the exclusivity of language that characterised the social segregation in the region, turning their gaze to other popular usages and collective imagination. The role of Casa de las Américas as a forum for channelling all sorts of discussions helped to legitimate the literary activity of most of the Boom authors, who generally sympathised with the Cuban revolutionary process. But as Gilman notes, soon after the complicated tensions between revolutionary politics, institutions, market and literature were also revealed, leading to divisions within the Latin American cultural and intellectual family. Examining the relationship between the renovation of literary forms that occurred during the Boom and the political hopes for social change helps us to understand how the emerging literary techniques, such as *testimonio*, contained as one of their key features the constant questioning of the political and ideological nature of literature.[212]

Gilman asserts that the increasing appearance of new magazines during those years was key to transforming writers into intellectuals, placing them in the centre of public debates and polemics, as well as providing wider visibility to their writings. The literary success of these authors, many with journalist backgrounds and thus familiarised with modern forms of communication, allowed their voices to be heard by the masses, and their public interventions became as relevant as their work. This also helped to emphasise the modernist idea of a new beginning, which the Latin American cultural community embraced. One of the undeniable sources that contributed to this phenomenon was the magazine that Casa de las Américas published under its own name.

According to Gilman, during the first phase of this budding cultural movement, the notion dominating intellectual activity in connection to politics was commitment, due to the notable influence of Sartre.[213] The debates then dealt with whether the commitment had to do with the work or with the author, reflecting the polemics

211] Due to the fact that Cortázar was living in Paris for so long, it has been argued that the market was expecting Walsh to become the great Argentine name of the Boom based in Argentina.

212] Gilman, Claudia 2003, pp 19-22.

213] On commitment, Sartre shifted from the existentialist positions of *Being and Nothingness* and *Existentialism is a Humanism* to a more active definition of the notion, coinciding with the political times and the questioning of intellectual activity within the Third World cultural context. He then ended up expressing that "[t]he task of the intellectual is not to decide where there are battles but to join them wherever and whenever the people wage them. Commitment is an act, not a word". See http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/bday/0621.html

between the political avant-garde and the cultural avant-garde –between communicability and legibility. Eventually, a shift was produced due to two major factors. Gilman believes that the year that marked this division was 1967, when two key events took place: one related to the cultural market and the other to the political situation.[214]

On one hand, the literary renovating proposal of the Boom got exhausted when *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (*Cien Años de Soledad*) by Gabriel García Márquez was published in 1967. The success of the novel worldwide led to the reorganisation of the market, reducing possibilities for the wave's continued literary development. This opened up polemics and debates among the authors about issues that had already been present before, but that now would end up driving to irreconcilable positions. On the other hand, the death in 1967 of Che Guevara, who had been leading a guerrilla movement in Bolivia, empowered the view of the revolutionary guerrilla strategy as a solution to the problems of Latin America. The impact of this event on the cultural field was huge and the demands that those participating in the cultural scene take an active role complicated the heterogeneous positions of intellectuals' commitment towards the revolution.[215]

In Latin America, Guevara's influence on the cultural field was as big as it was on politics, due to his continuous interventions in both realms. As Gilman notes, his criticism towards Soviet cultural policies regarding socialist realism became particularly relevant. In terms that are reminiscent of Gramsci's explorations of folklore as *common sense* and Benjamin's reflections on history and art, Guevara saw these policies as a bureaucratic stimulation of what "everyone understands", killing "the authentic artistic research" and "reducing the problem of general culture to an appropriation of the socialist present and the dead past".[216] And in times of the strategic alliance between Cuba and the USSR, Guevara's interventions felt extremely attuned to a common concern regarding guerrilla warfare and the Soviet reticence towards it within the context of the Cold War. Among the Latin American cultural family, his critical expressions made him not just a guerrilla leader but also an integral intellectual that fully engaged with both politics and culture.

Casa de las Americas dedicated issue number 46 of its magazine to Guevara and his memory, as an expression of the collective mourning of the cultural family of Latin America.[217] One of the dominating feelings after his death was shame for not being an active part of the revolutionary enterprise. In this issue of the magazine, Walsh himself wrote a text on Guevara in which he clearly revealed that sentiment:

> "[T]o many of us it's difficult to avoid the embarrassment ... that Guevara has died with so few around. Of course, we didn't know, officially we knew

214] Gilman, Claudia 2003, pp. 30-31.
215] Ibid., pp. 150-158.
216] Ibid., p. 155. The quotes belong to Che Guevara's *El Socialismo y el Hombre en Cuba*.
217] *Casa de las Américas*, 46, January-February 1968. The issue included texts of writers as significant as Alejo Carpentier, Julio Cortázar, Jorge Semprún, Italo Calvino, Ángel Rama, Roque Dalton, Francisco Urondo, Roberto Fernández Retamar, Nicolás Guillén, Mario Benedetti, Juan Gelman, Manuel Galich and Rodolfo Walsh, among many others.

Che Guevara's dead body in Bolivia.

> nothing, but some of us suspected, feared. We were slow, guilty? It's useless to discuss the matter, but that feeling that I talk about remains, at least for me, and perhaps it is a new point of departure".[218]

For Gilman, Guevara's death became a call to "rethink the past and rewrite recent history",[219] and turned into an interrogation of who deserved to represent the historical collective identification of the Other and the subaltern groups in Latin America. As she asserts, Guevara's mistrust of intellectuals led many to demand from intellectuals not only the critical commitment that had dominated the scene so far but also a revolutionary role to fully legitimate their cultural practice.[220] This, along with the success of the Literary Boom in the capitalist Western market, provoked the challenging of cultural activity and hegemonic literary forms like the novel were questioned as elitist bourgeois expressions.[221] The Latin American cultural family began to wonder what could make the intellectual a genuine revolutionary. And

218] Walsh, Rodolfo, 'Guevara', in Walsh, Rodolfo 2008, *El Violento Oficio de Escribir. Obra Periodística (1953-1977)*, Buenos Aires: Ediciones de la Flor, pp. 283-285. (All quotations from this publication are the author's translation.)
219] Gilman, Claudia 2003, p. 172.
220] Ibid., pp. 143-144.
221] See for instance Mario Benedetti's criticism of other Boom writers, in Shaw, Donald L. 1998, *The Post-Boom in Spanish American Fiction*, New York: State University of New York Press, pp. 26-28.

thus, during the Cultural Congress of Havana of 1968, which became a tribute to Guevara, what Gilman calls the *anti-intellectualist* positions reached their peak.[222]

ANTI-INTELLECTUALISM AND THE *ORGANIC INTELLECTUAL*

"The tension between word and action",[223] as Gilman notes, was what defined the dilemma of the Latin American intellectual. Making political and revolutionary art became the main goal, and how to make it produced a series of enriching debates reflected within the literary scene, in terms close to those held by Benjamin and Brecht in search of the *appropriate form*. But the rejection of Soviet realism did not exclude realism as a form of social criticism. Thus, on the contrary, realism rose to prominence and, as the link between art and social reality was essential to achieving political goals, authors like Georg Lukács were revisited.[224] The cultural avant-garde had to solve the dichotomy between the possibilities of communication and form. Once politics legitimated culture, and Cuba became the main legitimator of both politics and culture, a critical committed work and thought did not seem to be enough. It was essential to avoid any aesthetical bourgeois temptation and participate actively in the national and popular revolutionary processes –which seemed the highest cultural enterprise, in harmony with Fanon's influence. Gilman asserts that the political (and armed) avant-garde had won over the cultural avant-garde.[225] For her, one of the essential lines of thought was *anti-intellectualism*, which refers to those intellectuals who subordinated their work to revolutionary politics and action.[226] We can then argue about this process in connection with the Gramscian notion of the *organic intellectual*, which in its most extreme form extended to those authors that ended up joining guerrilla movements, as in the case of Rodolfo Walsh.

Gramsci understood that there were two types of intellectuals: *traditional* ones, who saw themselves as separated from society and incapable of understanding their activity as part of the economical production of the social order, and those he called *organic intellectuals*. Every class produces intellectuals organically, who articulate culturally what remains unstructured in the realm of the masses, bringing forward the notions they consider ripe for debate, and thus contributing to forming society's *conceptions of the world* as knowledge through *common sense*. *Organic intellectuals* legitimate the social order according to the views of the group from which they pro-

222] Gilman, Claudia 2003, pp. 175-177.
223] Ibid., 29.
224] In *Realism in the Balance* (1938) Lukács wrote: "If literature is a particular form by means of which objective reality is reflected, then it becomes of crucial importance for it to grasp that reality as it truly is, and not merely to confine itself to reproducing whatever manifests itself immediately and on the surface. If a writer strives to represent reality as it truly is ... then the question of totality plays a decisive role, no matter how the writer conceives the problem intellectually". Lukács' text was part of a debate he held on expressionism with Ernst Bloch, which provoked a larger debate on the issue of realist vs. modernist literary forms, which involved Brecht, Benjamin and Adorno. See Bloch, Ernst; Lukács, Georg; Brecht, Bertolt; Benjamin, Walter; and Adorno Theodor 1980, *Aesthetics and Politics*, edited and translated by Ronald Taylor, London: Verso, p. 33. See also Haslett, Moyra 2000, *Marxist Literary and Cultural Studies*, New York: St. Martin's Press, pp. 86-125.
225] Gilman, Claudia 2003, p. 162.
226] Ibid., p. 164.

ceed. Traditionally, *organic intellectuals* came from the dominant classes, due to the economical power that facilitated their access to education and culture. For subverting the dominance of the bourgeois, Gramsci understood that the working class had to produce its own *organic intellectuals* in order to develop a critical understanding of the established social order that dominated the intellectual activity of people, and thus eventually transgress and transform it.[227] Regarding Gramsci's reflections in connection to the Latin American cultural scene being studied here, we can consider how the emphasis on the role of revolutionary politics in culture actually meant a call for producing intellectuals organically. A call that was necessarily interlaced with the responsibility of the intellectuals towards the energy and events of their time.

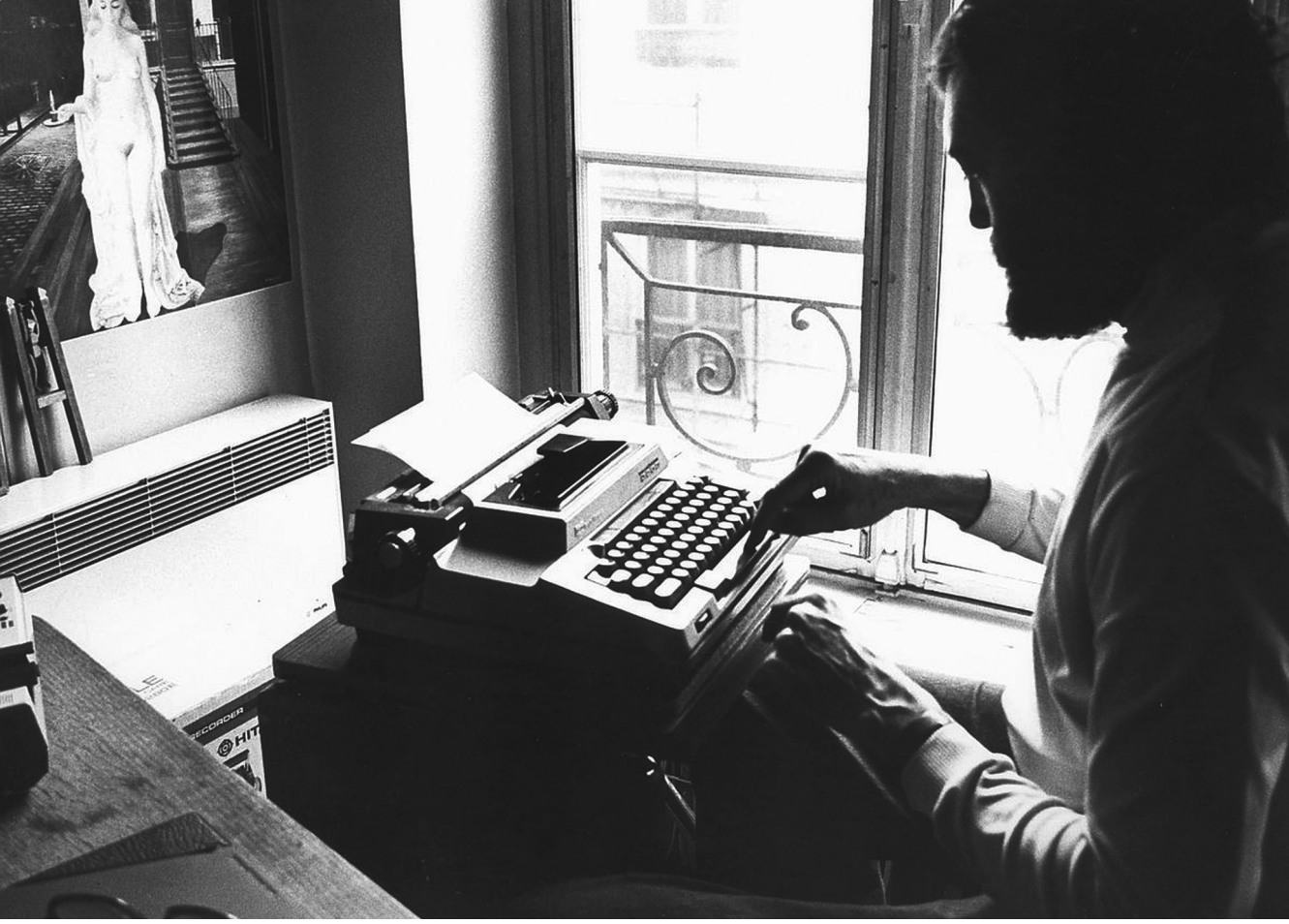
The emergence of the *anti-intellectual* phenomenon did not mean in practice a massive and immediate passage to political action, but nevertheless, with deteriorating political conditions, the debate became more and more central. This is exemplified by how Walsh, as part of the revolutionary union CGTA, addressed the intellectuals of his country in the program he elaborated for the May 1, 1968:

> "[T]he intellectual field is by definition the conscience. An intellectual who does not understand what happens in his time and country is a walking contradiction, and who understanding does not act, will have a place in the anthology of crying, not in his living history of his land".[228]

Shifting from commitment to embracing political action appeared for many as too big a qualitative leap. Issue number 45 of Casa de las Américas of November-December, 1967, illustrated this question meaningfully. The issue, in print when Guevara was killed, was dedicated to "the situation of the Latin American intellectual", as titled on the cover. More than half of its over 200 pages debated significant aspects of the role of the Latin American intellectual in such crucial times. Relevant cultural figures approached the topic from the local specificity of the inquiry, empowering both the focus on national culture and the transnational solidarity within the region.[229]

Mario Vargas Llosa, for instance, wrote on the Peruvian playwright, poet, journalist and essayist Sebastián Salazar Bondy and the "vocation of the writer in Peru" to reflect on the dilemma of being a socialist writer "in a country that does not need writers", due to the underdevelopment of Peru.[230] Puerto Rican writer Manuel Maldonado Denis embraced Herbert Marcuse's call for "subversion" through thought, in connection to the role of the intellectual in Puerto Rico.[231] The Colombian literary critic Jaime Mejía Duque dedicated his text to the Colombian Catholic priest and

227] Gramsci, Antonio 1999, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, edited and translated by Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, London: ElecBook, pp. 134-147.
228] Walsh, Rodolfo, '1 de Mayo: Mensaje a los Trabajadores y al Pueblo Argentino', *CGT*, 1, 1st May 1968. (Translated by the author.)
229] *Casa de las Américas*, 45, November-December 1967. (All quotations from this publication are the author's translation.)
230] Vargas Llosa, Mario 1967, 'Sebastián Salazar Bondy y la Vocación del Escritor en el Perú', *Casa de las Américas*, 45, pp. 14-29.
231] Maldonado Denis, Manuel 1967, 'El Papel del Intelectual en el Puerto Rico de Hoy', *Casa de las Américas*, 45, pp. 77-82.



Julio Cortázar.

guerrilla fighter Camilo Torres Restrepo, dead in 1966, as an intellectual and political leader, praising the "idea of the sacrifice of the hero as an efficient example *in every circumstance*".[232] Guatemalan playwright and writer Manuel Gallich reflected on the differences of the governments of his country led by intellectuals and how some had served to legitimate the US domination over Guatemala, calling upon young intellectuals to embrace the exemplary revolutionary figures of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara.[233] Regarding the situation of the writer in the region, Mario Benedetti compared the views of those writing on "the decisive instant" of Latin America from outside to those from inside, with the mixed values of testimony, subjectivity and distortion. He concluded that, regardless of the distance from the matter, the context always conditions thought and no definitive objectivity is ever possible to achieve. Benedetti recognised the change of the Latin American writer, due to the increasing repression in some countries and also a wider public access to its work. His text underscored the urgency of "taking sides", once "the age of the pure immaculate writer is definitively over" and one "cannot close the doors to reality anymore".[234]

232] Mejía Duque 1967, 'El Padre Camilo: Revolución y Sacrificio', *Casa de las Américas*, 45, pp. 93-97.
233] Gallich, Manuel 1967, 'Las Ideas Condenadas a Muerte', *Casa de las Américas*, 45, pp. 84-92.
234] Benedetti, Mario 1967, 'Situación del Escritor en América Latina', *Casa de las Américas*, 45, pp. 31-36.

One of the most significant contributions came from Julio Cortázar, who sent a letter to Roberto Fernández Retamar, Cuban poet and director of Casa de las Américas.[235] Cortázar was one of the most relevant Latin American intellectuals during those years. His text was even more relevant because he had been living away from the region for sixteen years already, something that had developed certain suspicion among other writers about the legitimacy of his commitment.[236] In the letter, Cortázar recognised that before he did not care much about the question of the Latin American intellectual, but that the reality of the times obliged him to avoid games, "and above all the word games".[237] While bringing up the issue of the local and transnational values within the region, he suggested that the main problem of the contemporary intellectual was "peace founded on social justice".[238]

He also reflected on the tension between intellectuals devoted to their national cause and those that used universal values to tackle the circumstances embracing dominant foreign cultures. Thus, he reflected on his own paradoxical situation of, thanks to the Cuban Revolution, rediscovering his condition of being Latin American and the *Argentinity*[239] of his work while living in France, where he embraced his identity in an environment that oversimplified Latin American events. Cortázar explained that his views on literature had changed and now contained "the conflict between the individual realisation as understood by humanism, and the collective realisation as understood by socialism".[240] He expressed that this dilemma was not easy for him to cope with, considering the European cultural standards that surrounded him and their temptations, which seemed morally intolerable "if we don't assume decisively the condition of intellectual of the third world".[241] For him, the work of these intellectuals who are sensitive to "that rebellion will incarnate within people's consciousness ... justify[ing] with its present and future action this craft of writing for which we were born".[242] Notably, Cortázar underscored the urgency of the times calling for the writer to be part of the "immediate historical fate of men", because the times demanded that as a "responsibility and obligation".[243] And thus, in terms that might recall Benjamin, he demanded the Latin American writer "be a witness of his time ... and that his work or his life ... gives that testimony in the appropriate form".[244]

Thus, accompanying the scepticism towards the Boom and after Guevara's death, the Latin American intellectual had to walk the transformation from the bourgeois

235] Cortázar, Julio 1967, 'Carta', *Casa de las Américas*, 45, pp. 5-12.
236] Walsh himself, who appreciated many aspects of Cortázar's work, had expressed certain concerns in this regard, though mainly privately. See, for instance, Walsh, Rodolfo 2007, *Ese Hombre y Otros Papeles Personales*, Buenos Aires: Ediciones de la Flor, p. 119, 138 or 193, or Walsh, Rodolfo; Urondo, Francisco and Portantiero, Juan Carlos, 'La Literatura Argentina del Siglo XX', in Baschetti, Roberto (ed.) 1994, *Rodolfo Walsh, Vivo*, Buenos Aires: Ediciones de la Flor, p. 56. (All the subsequent quotations from these publications are the author's translation.)
237] Cortázar, Julio 1967, p. 6.
238] Ibid.
239] Ibid., p. 10
240] Ibid., pp. 10-11.
241] Ibid., p. 11.
242] Ibid., p. 12.
243] Ibid., p. 11.
244] Ibid.

to the Guevarian *new man*. Walsh wrote extensively on this shift in his private writings, reflecting his internal and conflictive struggle with the *conceptions of the world* he had assumed throughout his life towards art and the transition he was called to undertake. And thus, ironically, he marked 1967 as the beginning of this change:

> "My relationship with literature has two phases: of overrating and mythification until 1967, when I already had two short story books published and a novel started; of devaluation and gradual rejection after 1968, when the political task becomes an alternative".[245]

Walsh reflected widely upon his obsession with the novel as a "superior form of art", as he expressed that "the norms of art I have accepted ... are bourgeois", and claimed he had the "capacity to pass to a revolutionary art".[246] He saw in the film *The Hour of the Furnaces* (*La Hora de los Hornos*, 1968) by Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, which originally founded Third Cinema, a path to follow, concluding that this was a path "I started to travel ten years ago" –referring to his first testimonial novel, *Operation Massacre*.[247] In this regard, and while debating the capacity of the novel to "represent" but not to "present" events, Walsh also questioned those who commented that his testimonial work *Who Killed Rosendo?* (*¿Quién Mató a Rosendo?*) could have made "a good novel", as if "the novelised version of a story would take it to a superior category",[248] neutralising its potential of denunciation and activating readers. "Once converted into the art of the novel it becomes inoffensive, it doesn't disturb at all, I mean it is sacralised as art",[249] he wrote on the matter. In another part he also questioned the ambiguity of "the condition of the artist in the bourgeois society" and his tendency to overestimate his role in the world, which he repudiated harshly because "nobody values him as he values himself".[250]

These reflections, extended throughout the Latin American intellectual field, show how necessary it was to find a point of encounter between literature and political action, and reformulate the forms of literary representation for that purpose. The conflictive and dizzying reality became the central concern, once its simple recreation had been proven inefficient. The social change being demanded needed a culture that participated in this transformation; any other type seemed useless.

245] Walsh, Rodolfo, 2007, p. 234.
246] Ibid., p. 120. Regarding the bourgeois condition of literature and its difficulties to reach the popular classes, see also ibid., pp. 158-160.
247] Ibid., p. 120.
248] 'Hoy es Imposible en la Argentina Hacer Literatura Desvinculada de la Política. Reportaje de Ricardo Piglia a Rodolfo Walsh. Marzo 1970', in Baschetti, Roberto (ed.) 1994, pp. 67-68.
249] Ibid., p. 68.
250] Walsh, Rodolfo, 2007, p. 233. Regarding his criticisms on endogamous behaviours among the literary family on the so-called "Padilla affair", see also ibid., p. 207, and Walsh, Rodolfo, 'Ofuscaciones, Equívocos y Fantasias en el Mal Llamado Caso Padilla', in Walsh, Rodolfo 2008, pp. 380-382.

"THE FORMS APPROPRIATE TO THE LITERARY ENERGY OF OUR TIME": THE EMERGENCE OF *TESTIMONIO*

The new situation that the Latin American cultural field was facing led to profound debates over the literary forms that could appropriately illustrate the demands of the era. As Gilman notes, some of the key discussions during this period had to do with the notions of realism and the avant-garde, as a result of the connection between culture and politics.[251] The cultural family did not support leaving aside the contributions of the European cultural avant-garde, once the Soviet policies and other orthodox Marxist positions seemed responsible for the departure of the cultural avant-garde from politics. But on the other hand, the notion of the cultural avant-garde that situated the intellectual as an experimenter of new forms was seen as an elitist and bourgeois decadent temptation within an economically and politically dependent region. This seemed to be lacking popular characteristics, poor from a communicative perspective and reflecting a kind of submission to the idea of European cultural superiority, in keeping with the ideas of the *colonial mentality* studied by Fanon.

These tensions between the communicative possibilities of culture to reach the popular masses and the capacity of the arts to innovate within their own realms reflected the major issue being debated: a culture for the masses or a culture for the elites? If the cultural avant-garde was bourgeois and elitist, then it was problematic to unite it with the goals of the political avant-garde. Even if interrogating the possibilities of modern forms of communication was relevant enough to appreciate the contribution of the cultural avant-garde, the political avant-garde had become the major legitimator of culture, as it was positioned closer to the popular feeling of emancipation within revolutionary times. And thus, on culture, literature and the popular, it might be worth noting for the discussions we are dealing with, what Gramsci pointed to regarding his Italian context, when he noticed that "neither a popular artistic literature nor a local production of 'popular' literature exists because 'writers' and 'people' do not have the same conception of the world". He blamed Italian writers for not living "the feelings of the people" and thus not having "a 'national educative' function".[252] Gramsci observed this as a reflection of the ideology of a decadent class incapable of expanding their interests to other groups, so their culture remained intellectually elitist and isolated from the national-popular, dependent on more developed cultural and political national entities. As he understood that the intellectual had to organically participate in the formation of consensus, attuned with hegemonic aspirations, he added another aspect to the intellectual's role: his pedagogical capability. Forms of expression such as Latin American testimonial literature or Third Cinema, even if related to a different context of culture and politics, explored widely these same inquiries.

251] Gilman, Claudia 2003, pp. 307-327.
252] Forgacs, David, in During, Simon (ed.) 1999, p. 214.

As we have seen, after 1967 the intellectual had to face the dilemmas of realism and the avant-garde in literature, and find ways to rethink these notions within the particularity of their context, proposing new ways to approach them appropriately. And thus Rodolfo Walsh reflected on this matter as follows:

> "Realism doesn't oppose necessarily avant-gardism. When the exhaustion of themes or forms weakens the picture of reality and its interpretation, the realist author becomes avant-gardist inevitably. Avant-garde is then the way that realism assumes in a historical conjunction of exhaustion. ... In Latin America the realist writer is in the avant-garde when he makes clear whatever is invisible ... Carlos Fuentes and Vargas Llosa, the best Cortázar, are realism and are avant-garde, without contradiction between the terms".[253]

Eventually these inquiries had to cope with the most successful form that identified the Latin American Literary Boom in the market worldwide: the novel. It is within these discussions that the cultural family started to explore other literary forms. In this regard, a closer approach to the voice of the Other and the *intersubjective* historical experience of the popular masses took a central position, in combination with the demands of national liberation that the revolutionary times embodied. The novel was not just decadent, elitist and bourgeois, but also a form that emphasised the relevance of the author as an individual innovating with language, often from a privileged perspective isolated from the masses. There was then a renovated appreciation of other literary forms that matched better with the communicative aims being demanded, such as theatre, poetry or the protest song. And arguably the most relevant one that reflected these times of literary exhaustion was testimonial literature or *testimonio*.

Meant to revolutionise culture and open people's access to its bastion of possibilities, the new forms gave full priority to the pedagogical value of their proposals, in order to awaken the political consciousness of people.[254] *Testimonio* became one of these new forms that exemplified the hegemonic position of *organic intellectualism* within the Latin American cultural family. Martí was then revisited as an intellectual model for his poetry but mainly for the commitment of his literary work developed in public media.[255] As Gilman notes

> "The testimonial-novel or simply *testimonio*, would come to replace the exhaustion of the novel as a tool for knowledge. In *testimonio* the knowledge of reality came first, to which the author-witness stamped a fundamentally historical meaning".[256]

253] Quoted in Gilman, Claudia 2003, pp. 323-324.
254] This approach recalls Gramsci's concern with education, which he saw as a central issue, in relation to his reflections on the intellectual. His views on the matter influenced Latin American educators as relevant as Paulo Freire at the time. See Gramsci, Antonio 1999, pp. 162-190.
255] Gilman, Claudia 2003, pp. 342-343.
256] Ibid., p. 343.

The relevance of testimonial literature, with its natural proximity to journalism over fiction, underscored communication as the central cultural concern of this period in order to reach a massive audience and democratise the cultural field. This necessarily interrogated the means of production and reception too. For this purpose, the individual author had to be inscribed within the *intersubjective* collective experience, because emancipation needed to be achieved nationally and alongside the people. For this reason, national and popular culture was a critical part of the process. As the local expressions of the subaltern, the identification and recognition with the people and the nation –substituting universal categories like the masses– became a rhetorical tool to surpass the specific interest of the different local groups and unite around the historical need for change for the benefit of the majority. The popular became the foundational grounds for every cultural expression that aimed to transcend the interests of the intellectual group and inscribe its practice within wider political aims. This desire for social change also opposed the elitist need for the innovation of "high culture". We could then see this approach to inscribe culture in the popular in Grasmcian terms, as a cultural way to facilitate socially the shift from the conformist *common sense* to an alternative *good sense*. Popular culture, as the space where collective values, beliefs and identities are constructed, became the right space to subvert and fight the dominant culture that had represented official history traditionally.

It is within this scope that we could inscribe the militant essayist proposals that Eduardo Galeano developed in *The Open Veins of Latin America*, for instance, as one of the seminal works that echoed Martí's unifying notion of *Our America*. In it, he reflected on how "everything" in Latin America had been historically "transmuted" into Western capital and "accumulated in distant centers of power". And thus he expressed the shared concern that "[a]long the way we have even lost the right to call ourselves Americans", turning Latin America into a "nebulous identity".[257] Galeano interlaced the Latin American shared history of subordination and inequality through stories of popular and national resistance, as a reflection of the conflictive battle between hegemony and the subaltern within a context of external dominance. The recollection of these local *scenes* referred to shared *intersubjective* memory to trespass particular interests and serve the struggle for emancipation and social change of the whole region. It is significant to note how the debate on the political avant-garde is echoed in the aims of Galeano's work, as reflected in the following passage:

> "Is everything forbidden us except to fold our arms? Poverty is not written in the stars; under development is not one of God's mysterious designs. Redemptive years of revolution pass... In a sense the right wing is correct in identifying itself with tranquillity and order: it is an order of daily hu-

257] Galeano, Eduardo 1997, *The Open Veins of Latin America. Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent*, New York: Monthly Review Press, p. 2.

> miliation for the majority, but an order nonetheless; it is a tranquillity in which injustice continues to be unjust and hunger to be hungry".[258]

Additionally, Latin American literature professor Idalia Morejón Arnaiz understands that the urgent need for documenting the memory of the era and the aim of eliminating any obstacle to writing and reading these works are closely linked, as part of the inclusive goals of a revolutionary culture.[259] For this reason, the themes of *testimonio* often deal with the resistance of the people, national recognition and social emancipation. Giving testimony and documenting *the real* became then a must. The intellectual was called to renegotiate *the real* and establish a new consensus around a new agenda of priorities. As Morejón Arnaiz suggests, this meant a "shift in subjectivity, in ideology and its power ... to transform the consciousness",[260] achieved through "a new economy of literature" in which interviews, statements, memories, reportages or diaries can meet in a "generic transversality", as "points of departure" that illustrate the new and shifting social transformation taking place.[261]

THE INSTITUTIONALISATION OF TESTIMONIAL LITERATURE

Within this context Rodolfo Walsh, who struggled dramatically to write a novel that was never finished and for which he received a salary, became a key figure in the search for new forms adapted to the times. In 1960, Casa de las Américas started to give a series of awards in the areas of poetry, the novel, short story, theatre and essay that became increasingly prestigious within the Latin American literary field. In 1970, coinciding with the debates discussed above, the institution established a new literary award for testimonial literature in Latin America. In issue number 200 of Casa de las Américas, Cuban scholar Jorge Fornet collected some excerpts of the discussion that occurred on February 4, 1969, leading to the creation of this award. Until then, most of testimonial works competed within the awards for either the novel or essay genres. Fornet exposed that certainly Casa did not "create the genre", but by establishing the award "it legitimated it and provided a new reference framework" for a genre with a "very defined political connotation".[262] In the discussion –which saw testimonial literature as a trans-generic form privileging the political function of "giving testimony" over its possibilities as a new genre–, a series of relevant literary figures participated: Uruguayan writer and literary critic Ángel Rama, Chilean writer Isadora Aguirre, German author and poet Hans Magnus

258] Ibid., p. 7.
259] Morejón Arnaiz, Idalia 2006, 'Testimonio de una Casa', *Revista Encuentro*, 40, p. 94. (All quotations from this publication are the author's translation.)
260] Ibid., p. 97.
261] Ibid.
262] Fornet, Jorge 1995, 'La Casa de las Américas y la "Creación" del Género Testimonio', *Casa de las Américas*, 200, July-September 1995: pp. 121. (All quotations from this publication are the author's translation.)

Enzenberger, Guatemalan playwright and writer Manuel Galich, Argentine literary critic and writer Noé Jitrik, and the founder and director of Casa de las Américas, Haydee Santamaría.

In that encounter, Rama spoke out about the increasing importance of certain works that "gave testimony ... about what is happening in Latin America, ... the Latin American struggle through literature".[263] Enzenberger –who also talked about the exhaustion of literature's popular influence and called upon literature to give testimony and enlighten people's consciousness through its pedagogical value–, asserted that the series of genres in the awards were obsolete, as they excluded "the reportage, the testimony, the factography, and the non-fiction novel".[264] Jitrik even suggested that this solution could be deeper and more critical, and thus "journalism or testimonial literature ... could even replace the current essay category", which he felt was "in absolute crisis".[265] Thus, in various ways the discussion encapsulated questions of the indivisible cultural and political times described above, rethinking the literary *forms appropriate* to the energy of the times.

On March 2, 1970, a short text appeared in the monthly bulletin of Casa, written by Galich. In it there was an attempt to define testimonial literature as a genre, specifying what in the rules of the award had been established as "a book in which is documented, from a direct source, an aspect of the current Latin American reality".[266] It then distinguished *testimonio* from other genres with which it could share certain elements, such as "the reportage, the narrative, the research (essay) and the biography".[267] One of the crucial aspects Galich underlined in his text is the value of local specificity in the testimonial literary work, as it "must be placed within a social context, being closely linked to it, typify a collective phenomenon, a class, a period, a process (a dynamic), or a non-process (a standstill, a backwardness) of the society or of a group, ... being current, within the Latin American quandary".[268] On February 2, 1970, Galich invited Rodolfo Walsh to be part of the jury of the new award, praising the significance of *Operation Massacre* and arguing that, as he was "the author of one of the works of the best quality, highly representative of that genre, ... your orientation and advise would be very valuable".[269] Walsh replied on April 27, 1970:

> "I believe it is a very wise decision from Casa de las Américas to incorporate the testimonial genre in the annual contest. It is the first legitimation of a medium of great efficiency for popular communication".[270]

263] Rama, Ángel; Aguirre, Isidora; Enzenberger, Hans Magnus; Galich, Manuel; Jitrik, Noé; and Santamaría, Haydee 1995, 'Conversación en Torno al Testimonio', *Casa de las Américas*, 200, p. 122.
264] Ibid., p. 123.
265] Ibid., p. 124.
266] Ibid.
267] Ibid.
268] Ibid., p. 125.
269] Ibid., p. 121.
270] Ibid.

Also in 1970, and in tune with these reflections, Argentine writer Ricardo Piglia interviewed Walsh on the situation of literature in their country. In it, Walsh wondered if "the fictional art is reaching its splendorous end", as "a new type of society and new forms of production demand a new type of art, more documentary-like",[271] calling not to dismiss the whole variety of literary forms for embracing *testimonio*, but to use them in a different way. And thus he claimed:

> "I feel incapable of imagining ... a novel or a short story that is not a denunciation, and therefore would not be a presentation, but a representation, a second term of the original story, but that takes part openly within reality and can affect and change it, using the traditional forms but using them in a different way ... Because today it is impossible to make a literature disassociated from politics in Argentina".[272]

The importance of institutionalising such an award at that particular time provoked a profound literary debate related to cultural hegemony, dependence and forms of representation. We could argue that this political commitment of the genre to specific revolutionary ideas in Latin American culture, the link between culture and politics, the role of the intellectual as an organic member of a profound process of social transformation and the emphasis on the role of memory in *making history*, are aspects notably related to notions explored by Gramsci, Benjamin and Fanon. On the other hand, the institutionalisation of the genre also served to legitimate the cultural policies of the Cuban Revolution, becoming hegemonic among the Latin American intellectual and cultural family, at least until new divisions took place.

John Beverley, one of the prominent literary critics of *testimonio*, links the genre to subaltern studies, as part of the struggle for hegemony in which the dominant forms of representation and their "cognitive authority" is of key concern.[273] Beverley proposes *testimonio* as an emergent literary genre that gave voice to those who did not have one, expressing the collective social struggles that dominated Latin America. And thus he defines it as

> "a novel or novella-length narrative in book or pamphlet ... form, told in the first person by a narrator who is also the real protagonist or witness of the events he or she recounts, and whose unit of narration is usually a 'life' or a significant life experience".[274]

Beverley sees the genre as the representational form of the subaltern, a form of popular resistance of the Other that interrogates the foundations of the literary

271] Baschetti, Roberto (ed.) 1994, p. 67.
272] Ibid., p. 70.
273] Beverley, John 2004, *Subalternity and Representation. Arguments in Cultural Theory*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, p. 1.
274] Beverley, John 2004, *Testimonio. On the Politics of Truth*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 30-31.

institution itself, by bringing to the centre of the scene the voice of those excluded from history. And so he emphasises

> "how people who are marginalized, repressed, and exploited ... use something like testimonio for their purposes: that is, as a weapon, a way of fighting back".[275]

Nevertheless, in harmony with Gramscian criticism of the popular literature that tends to solely mystify the subaltern and reinforce its *commonsensical* folklore and conformism for the benefit of the established hegemony, *testimonio* aims at serving the subaltern critically, in order to favour consciousness-raising that can anticipate the desired social change.

Fredric Jameson places testimonial literature within the fruitful contradictions between the First and the Third World,[276] and understands it as a representation of collective memory and identity of the latter. Specific social and political life, in connection with the realms of both the temporary and the historical where past and present converge, achieves its key significance.[277] For Jameson, *testimonio* aims at an audience that belongs to the realm of the popular and the national, surpassing other particular groups' interests. Nevertheless, this view –linked to his notion regarding the predominance of *national allegories* in Third World literature– has been criticised for being reductive and schematic in the Third World itself, as it separates the literary productions of First and Third World according to their social and economic development exclusively.[278]

As both *testimonio* and non-fiction novels, a label which according to Tom Wolfe was established by Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*, are often suggested as equal, a relevant element worth mentioning to distinguish them both is the connection between the methods employed and the political goals of each of these genres. As Argentine scholar Gonzalo Moisés Aguilar[279] illustrates, there is a great resistance to accepting the term non-fiction within the Latin American context because it qualifies it through a negative notion, suggesting that fiction would be the primal source for writing literature. Contrary to American non-fiction literature, the political nature of Latin American testimonial literature, its aims for justice and call to give testimony, is also defined by a different writing process. This might explain why is better labelled through a positive term, *testimonio*, which does not imply a break with fic-

275] Ibid., p. XVI.

276] Jameson, Fredric, 'De la Situación de Importaciones Literarias y Culturales en el Tercer Mundo: El Caso del Testimonio', in Beverley, John, and Achugar, Hugo (eds.) 2002, *La Voz del Otro: Testimonio, Subalternidad y Verdad Narrativa*, Ciudad de Guatemala: Ediciones Papiro, p. 129.

277] Ibid., pp. 140-141.

278] Xavier, Ismail, 'Historical Allegory', in Miller, Toby and Stam, Robert (ed.) 2004, *Film and Theory. An Anthology*, Malden and Oxford: Blackwell., p. 335. Xavier refers to Aijaz Ahmad's criticism of Jameson.

279] Moisés Aguilar, Gonzalo, 'Rodolfo Walsh: Escritura y Estado', in Lafforgue, Jorge (ed.) 2000, *Textos de y sobre Rodolfo Walsh*, Buenos Aires: Alianza Editorial, p. 71. (All quotations from this publication are the author's translation.) See also Amar Sánchez, Ana María, 'La Propuesta de una Escritura (En Homenaje a Rodolfo Walsh)', in Baschetti, Roberto (ed.) 1994, p. 88.

tion, but a reformulation and transformation of narrative forms for other purposes. As with the case of Walsh, the writing process of testimonial literature –linked to the organic immersion of the intellectual in his social context and his political commitment to social change and national-popular emancipation–, also affects the methodology, the form and its content, far from a pretended objectivity or neutrality.

All these aspects could help us to agree on the historicist sense of testimonial literature, as a narrative representation that shifts the subject of history and takes collective memory as part of a counterhegemonic struggle of the subaltern, questioning the dominating notions forging social order. The genre, hybrid and challenging, does not claim a neutral stance towards the conflictive reality. Instead, it embraces collective subjectivity or *intersubjectivity* for the purpose, embodying what its author regards as the emancipatory aims of the subaltern. History is thus encapsulated in a representative fragment of resistance or conflict, a micro history of the marginalised, as an Other's *truth* that opposes official *truth*. The protagonist or the witness takes a central role in the story. The first-person voice of the Other acquires the trust of the narrator, who often transcribes the testimony without intervening, while in his intercessions might also use fictional narrative techniques to achieve a major emotional impact, underscoring memory and historicity over what it sees as the *empty temptation* of other aesthetics. Therefore, it can be argued that testimonial literature appears as a reaction to the official objectivity that had traditionally subordinated the subaltern around the established *conceptions of the world*. Without calling for individual subjectivity to replace it, *testimonio* demands for the social, collective and popular interpretative experience to do so: it is a call for the committed *intersubjectivity*.

TESTIMONIO AND CINEMA

It would be worth exploring, even if briefly, some of the direct links between *testimonio* and cinema, as it also involves some of Rodolfo Walsh's activities. In 1981, Cuban writer, screenwriter and filmmaker Víctor Casaus published in issue 101 of Cine Cubano a text investigating the links between the testimonial genre and Cuban cinema, still then one of the main forces of what was known as New Latin American Cinema.[280] In his article, Casaus underlined two major characteristics of the genre: its immediacy and its communicative purposes. And thus the author extoled the figures of Rodolfo Walsh and Salvadorian poet Roque Dalton, as

> "in their names and their works are merged the present and the future of this literary genre, and at the same time, of the liberating battles of which they were witnesses and participants".[281]

280] Casaus, Víctor 1982, 'El Género Testimonio y el Cine Cubano', *Cine Cubano*, 101, pp. 115-125. (All quotations from this publication are the author's translation.)
281] Ibid., pp. 116-117.

After listing a series of reasons why *testimonio* was developed in Cuba, Casaus traced its links with other mediums, and very particularly with revolutionary Cuban cinema. He exposed the importance of Noticiero ICAIC Latinoamericano[282] and its impact on the maturation of the Cuban documentary.[283] Casaus analysed the main features of the Cuban documentary in connection with the testimonial genre, revealing how this also influenced a new emergent wave within the realm of fiction film –handicapped by poor industrial structures in the beginning, which slowed down its development. Nevertheless, the revolutionary *authenticity* of the tools provided by *testimonio* for the benefit of a national culture in conjunction with more crafty film techniques boosted the appearance of testimonial and documentary techniques in fiction films as relevant as Tomás Gutiérrez Alea's *Memories of Underdevelopment* (*Memorias del Subdesarrollo*, 1968) or Humberto Solas' *Lucía* (1968) and later more clearly in Oscar Valdés' *Life and Death in El Morrillo* (*Muerte y Vida en El Morrillo*, 1971), Manuel Herrera's *Bay of Pigs* (*Girón*, 1972) or Manuel Pérez's *The Man from Maisinicú* (*El Hombre de Maisinicú*, 1973).[284]

Argentine media scholar Mariano Mestman has also analysed the influence of *testimonio* on the New Latin American Cinema of the 60's and 70's, both to represent the specificity of its local reality and to present itself as *proof* of reality, underscoring the political, pedagogical and communicative conception of culture of the period.[285] Mestman highlights the parallelism between the alternatives offered by both cultural practices regarding "the "overcoming" of cultural stages, cultural policies and their characteristic productions".[286] And thus, under the same pan-Latin Americanist and Third Worldist program, the dialogue between both the literary and the film fields lead us to think about *testimonio* as a key expression of the popular collective that demanded new forms of representation. The filmmaker was able to channel that popular voice of the Other and give full visibility to its authenticity, bringing the marginalised on stage as a protagonist and new social agent. For Mestman, the representation of two particular realms became essential to the political film of the region: the masses –the people that mobilised the historical processes– and *testimonio* –the witnesses of the oppression suffered by the people.

Jorge Cedrón's *Operation Massacre* (*Operación Masacre*, 1973) is among the films that Mestman researches. The film, based on the book by Walsh, who also wrote the script during his only incursion into the world of cinema, was shot clandestinely. It

282] The Noticiero ICAIC Latinoamericano was a revolutionary newsreel far from the standardised forms during this era that was propagated by ICAIC and developed under the original direction of Santiago Álvarez. UNESCO included it in its Memory of the World Register in 2009.

283] Casaus, Víctor 1982, p. 119.

284] Ibid., pp. 121-125.

285] Mestman, Mariano, 'Las Masas en la Era del Testimonio. Notas sobre el Cine del 68 en América Latina', in Mestman, Mariano and Varela, Mirta (ed.) 2013, *Masas, Pueblo, Multitud en Cine y Televisión*, Buenos Aires: Eudeba, pp. 179-180. (All quotations from this publication are the author's translation.)

286] Ibid., p. 180.

287] Julio Troxler was a Peronist militant who survived the José León Suárez massacre investigated by Walsh. He was in charge of security in Noticias between 1973-1974, a daily newspaper related to the Montoneros organisation where Walsh worked as one of the heads. He was killed in 1974 by the paramilitary far-right organisation Triple A. Troxler's testimony appears also in *The Hour of the Furnaces*.

Operation Massacre, Jorge Cedrón, 1973.

took the form of testimonial-fiction, in which one of the real figures of the historical events (Julio Troxler)[287] played the part of himself in the film. As Mestman observes

> "those *mise-en-scènes* do not play so much as a construction of a *verisimilitude* proper of fiction as it does as the configuration of an argumentation on the historical world proper of documentary".[288]

As Mestman discusses, Walsh, searching after 1968 for efficient literary forms for representing the realm of the popular,[289] decided, along with Cedrón, to involve Troxler not just as a character, but as a witness whose voice would provide the needed degree of *truth* to the film. Fiction and drama would then turn into a testimonial document. And thus Troxler's voice was also accompanied with the masses pictured through the use of archive material at the end of the film. For Mestman, this appears as a strategy for both representing the Peronist Resistance as a "collective epic story" of the Other and enrooting the Argentine guerrilla struggles of the early 70's in the events of June of 1956 that the book and the film depict.[290] Walsh himself expressed that the film was "dangerous because it exemplified a policy that has continued until today".[291]

This "everyday epicness", as Mestman labels it, recalling Brecht's notion of epic theatre, is an aspect that connects *testimonio* to public memory, confronting "the

288] Mestman, Mariano, in Mestman, Mariano and Varela, Mirta (ed.) 2013, p. 189.
289] Ibid., p. 191.
290] Ibid., p. 192.
291] Martín Peña, Fernando 2013, *El Cine Quema. Jorge Cedrón*, Buenos Aires: INCAA, p. 71. (Translated by the author.)

grandiloquence of the official discourse".[292] The author links this to the oral tradition and the "intersubjective communication of popular culture"[293] that dominated the emancipatory and revolutionary movements of the 60's and 70's in Latin America. Placing the Other at the centre of the screen was another way of politicising culture in which both literature and cinema represented those marginalised voices in order to break apart and enter the sacred bastions of culture and history.

GIVING TESTIMONY: THE CASE OF RODOLFO WALSH

Let's now turn our gaze to the particular case of Rodolfo Walsh and his contribution to the testimonial genre, as he is the central character of the script that serves as the origin for the reflections included within this study, and his views are profoundly influential on this project, especially regarding his critical active commitment and organic effort to bond culture with politics.

While some authors consider Walsh's *Operation Massacre* as just another antecedent of testimonial literature,[294] others name it as the first work of the genre,[295] underscoring Walsh's espousal of fiction techniques and the revolutionary program that distinguished his aesthetics from those of the non-fiction novel. In addition, sociologist Pablo Alabarces proposes that the voice of the Other in Walsh became highly relevant to the Argentine cultural context of the 60's, when the appearance of "popular sectors as political agents" occupied public and private spaces that had been historically reserved solely for the hegemonic classes. Regarding Walsh's interest in presenting the voice of the excluded, he comments that "talking about them and letting them talk" marked a historical qualitative leap in Argentine literature, opening the "sacred bastion of writing ... to the appearance of oral communication and popular culture".[296] In doing that, Walsh became one of the main figures in recognising the popular sectors as political actors with a voice, thus emphasising the importance of civil society. Due to the combination of journalistic and literary genres in his texts, his methodology and focus, his work has been related to what has been called "the anthropology of poverty": using firsthand micro-stories that at the same time could acquire a collective meaning.

Walsh's work was strongly linked to the dilemmas on aesthetics and politics we have explored regarding the question of the *appropriate form*. Thus, literature professor Ana María Amar Sánchez situates his writings in relation to the debates between Lukács and Brecht-Benjamin, observing that both positions cohabit and

292] Mestman, Mariano, in Mestman, Mariano and Varela, Mirta (ed.) 2013, p. 212.
293] Ibid., p. 213.
294] Nance, Kimberley A. 2006, *Can Literature Promote Justice? Trauma Narrative and Social Action in Latin American 'Testimonio'*, Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, p. 167.
295] See for instance Nofal, Rossana 2011, '*Operación Masacre*: La Fundación del Testimonio', in Badaró, Máximo and Forné, Anna (ed.), 'Memorias de la Represión en Argentina y Uruguay: Narrativas, Actores e Instituciones', *Stockholm Review of Latin American Studies*, 7, Institute of Latin American Studies Stockholms Universitet, pp. 57-70.
296] Alaberces, Pablo, 'Walsh: Dialogismos y Géneros Populares', in Lafforgue, Jorge (ed.) 2000, pp. 29-30.

correlate within his texts.[297] In a similar way, Piglia sees that Walsh, by conceiving of a new approach to the representation of popular sectors and elaborating his intellectual program along with them, developed *two poetics*: the urgency of giving testimony as a *truth-claim* on one hand, and the elliptic nature of fictive literature on the other.[298] We could argue then that these *two poetics* work indivisibly in *two times*: the immediacy and the transcendence. And thus Walsh's tension between literature and politics, as well as his doubts about and temptations towards fiction, even if transformed throughout the deepening of his political commitment, never were entirely resolved. As he confessed to Piglia:

> "That's why we don't have to take [it] ... as an isolated rejection of the traditional literary forms like the novel, the short story, to replace them for ever and definitely for the *testimonio*, but I think that we are going to have to use those forms in a different way".[299]

Piglia sees then that Walsh's use of language and his development of a "conscious style" brought him closer to Brecht in his effort for establishing and transmitting the *truth*[300] –or in other words, in producing and communicating knowledge.

In this regard, Argentine literary scholar Fabiana Grasselli notes that Walsh associated the notion of the avant-garde with the capacity of the arts to subvert and mobilise society, transforming the arts into tools for denunciation and counter-information against that established by the official power. Walsh then related new languages and forms to the social and political changes of a specific society in a specific time –linking it intimately to the collective historical experience of the people. And thus, for Walsh, surpassing the dominant literary genres, like the novel or the short story, also meant articulating forms of representation that provoked and called for militant action.[301] Amar Sánchez underscores the relevance of the montage technique in this process, a technique in which the documentary meets the goals for transcending the political limitations of allusive fictive representation. This placed Walsh, through his embracing a "historicity of forms", closer to Brecht's and Benjamin's positions on their debate with Lukács –new themes demand new forms and a flexible usage of techniques adapted to the needs of the times.[302] As Grasselli explains, Walsh's deepening in the testimonial praxis and emphasis on

297] Amar Sánchez, Ana María, in Baschetti, Roberto (ed.) 1994, pp. 89-93.
298] Piglia, Ricardo, 'Rodolfo Walsh y el Lugar de la Verdad', in Lafforgue, Jorge (ed.) 2000, p. 14.
299] Baschetti, Roberto (ed.) 1994, p. 70.
300] See Piglia, Ricardo 2000, 'Tres Propuestas para el Próximo Milenio (y Cinco Dificultades)', available in: http://www.casa.co.cu/publicaciones/revistacasa/222/piglia.htm Regarding the question of language, it is worth noticing that Walsh was actually very critical of the paternalist language of certain organic publications, like Montoneros' *Evita*, which we could ponder in relation to Gramsci's concern about the mystification of the subaltern in certain cultural manifestations that would end up benefiting the *commonsensical* notions established by hegemony. This was underlined in interviews the author held with Lila Pastoriza and Lucila Pagliai.
301] Grasselli, Fabiana 2010, 'Concepto de Vanguardia y Escritura Testimonial en los Programas Estético-Políticos de Rodolfo Walsh y Francisco Urondo', *Espectáculo-Revista de Estudios Literarios*, available in: https://pendientedemigracion.ucm.es/info/especulo/numero45/walsuron.html
302] Amar Sánchez, Ana María, in Baschetti, Roberto (ed.) 1994, p. 91.

the montage literary technique also meant a *de-canonisation of art* for the purpose of narrating the memory of the subaltern and gaining access to the popular sectors –two aspects that recall both Benjamin's and Gramsci's concerns.[303]

Eduardo Jozami, director of the Cultural Centre for the Memory Haroldo Conti,[304] is the author of one of the seminal works on Walsh, titled significantly *Rodolfo Walsh. The Word and the Action* (*Rodolfo Walsh. La Palabra y la Acción*). In its second edition, Jozami notices that, attuned with Gramsci's notion of the *organic intellectual* –to which we could also add his reflections on the political and pedagogical features of journalism[305]–, Walsh minimised his input in directing the weekly publication of the revolutionary union CGTA during 1968-69, as he claimed to provide mainly "technical knowledge" to it while learning from the workers and consulting with them about everything in tight cooperation with the directing organs of the union.[306] Thus, in using accessible language in the texts and only applying certain stylistic corrections to the contributions of the workers to the paper, Walsh endorsed a divulgating and educative view of his journalistic activity, concerns, as Mestman notes, that were also shared during his experience in the agency Prensa Latina in Cuba and that brought him close to a Leninist conception of the press.[307] In this regard, it is noteworthy that Walsh was carrying copies of Lenin's *What Is To Be Done?* and Gilles Perrault's *The Red Orchestra* on several occasions that involved discussing organic journalism throughout his life, as has been mentioned by some of his colleagues.[308] It is also worth mentioning that, in harmony with the debates regarding the active involvement of the intellectual in politics during his time, Walsh saw in Cuba the finest example for this, as he expressed that in Cuba the intellectual had to address "the new and complex problem" of facing "the difficult transformation ... into the protagonist in the life of his people",[309] and thus "writers and artists, more than enjoying [history], helped to make it".[310]

We could also argue that Walsh's work was linked to Gramsci's views in several other ways too, as in his central understanding of collective memory and the voice of the subaltern in the construction of history. In this regard, Grasselli exposes that

303] See Grasselli, Fabiana 2012, 'Una Literatura Peligrosa: Relatos Testimoniales y Sectores Subalternos en el Programa Estético-Político de Rodolfo Walsh', *Estudio Sociales Contemporáneos*, 7/8, pp. 46-58. Regarding Walsh's contribution to the construction of social memory, in connection with Benjamin's reflections on the capacity of the arts to intervene and mobilise socially, as well as its *de-canonisation*, see also Grasselli, Fabiana and Salomone, Mariano 2011, 'La Escritura Testimonial de Rodolfo Walsh: Politización del Arte y Experiencia Histórica', *Aisthesis*, 49, pp. 145-162.

304] The Cultural Centre for the Memory is established in the former ESMA (Navy School of Mechanics), the biggest secret military detention centre during the last dictatorship, where Jozami himself was held in captivity.

305] See Gramsci, Antonio 2000, *The Gramsci Reader. Selected Writings 1916-1935*, edited by David Forgacs, New York: New York University Press, pp. 379-390, or Landy, Marcia 1994, pp. 38-39.

306] Jozami, Eduardo 2011, *Rodolfo Walsh. La Palabra y la Acción*, second edition, Buenos Aires: Norma and Página/12, p. 159.

307] See Mestman, Mariano 1997, 'Semanario CGT. Rodolfo Walsh: Periodismo y Clase Obrera', *Causas y Azares*, 6, pp. 193-208, and Mestman, Mariano, 'Consideraciones sobre la Confluencia de Núcleos Intelectuales y Sectores del Movimiento Obrero. Argentina, 1968/1969', in Oteiza, Enrique (ed.) 1997, *Cultura y Política en los Años 60*, Buenos Aires: Ediciones CBC, pp. 207-230.

308] Personal interview held with Lila Pastoriza.

309] Walsh, Rodolfo 2007, p.102.

310] Ibid., p. 101.

Walsh saw history as an open-ended struggle that demanded a partisan position. Thus, when he talked about the *private property of history* and described how the "dominant classes have always tried to assure that the workers don't have history",[311] Walsh was also embracing the Gramscian view of the historical experience of the subaltern as fragmented and disarticulated. This understanding fit with his aesthetic agenda as writer and intellectual, articulated in connection with his political militancy.[312] Thus, by turning his literary praxis into an instrument for political action –shifting from representation to presentation–, he dedicated his work to collecting those silenced fragments of the subaltern collective experience to provide them with a *form appropriate* to the struggles of his time –intervening then in the conflictive succession of presents to unmask the stolen tales hidden by the *owners of history*. This *intersubjective* view of history and *truth*, as well as the emphasis on local specificity, led Walsh to underscore the role of the popular and the national in both literature and politics. And on the other hand, his identification with the Other –its memory and oral communication– in his writings, transforming these into tools for erasing both generic and cultural borders, allowed the presence of the subaltern sectors –"assuming a place and reclaiming a voice"[313]– in the traditionally restricted realms of language and history, placing his interrogation of intellectual activity within the revolutionary context he lived and joined.

Aguilar also analyses how Walsh's testimonial work modified the relationship between reader, writer and reference[314] –something we can link to Third Cinema, in the manner that it also challenges the relationship between audience, author and actors. We can consider how this aspect situated his literature within a process of dialectical relationships between hegemony and the subaltern, which was not separated from other social struggles in which he took part. As Aguilar demonstrates, for Walsh, it "is not possible to propose a writing without considering the relationship of social strengths and the nature of State",[315] as the latter is also the institutional materialisation of power. As we have seen, this indivisible relationship between literary praxis and political action aimed at dismantling the hegemonic and official *conceptions of the world* by confronting the experienced *truth* shared by the excluded voices. Within this commitment, Walsh's shift towards testimonial literature emphasised that the material interests at play between the different agents forming and deforming social relationships are more relevant to portraying reality than simply solving a crime or a mystery *per se,* like those that were present in his early fiction works.

In this regard, it is necessary to also underscore the importance of journalism for collective memory, as "memory is not simply neutral or a bastion of individual subjectivity",[316] like Aguilar notes. As the media played a decisive role in trans-

311] Walsh, Rodolfo 1969, 'Cordobazo', available in: http://www.memoriaabierta.org.ar/materiales/pdf/cordobazo.pdf
312] Grasselli, Fabiana 2012, 'Rodolfo Walsh y Francisco Urondo, el Oficio de Escribir', available in: http://www.eumed.net/tesis-doctorales/2012/fg/politizacion-arte-Rodolfo-Walsh.html. See also Grasselli, Fabiana and Salomone, Mariano 2011, p. 152.
313] Walsh, Rodolfo 2008, p. 167.
314] Moisés Aguilar, Gonzalo, in Lafforgue, Jorge (ed.) 2000, p. 61.
315] Ibid., p. 70.
316] Ibid., p. 67.

forming the Latin American writer into an intellectual, for Walsh, journalism was naturally connected to his testimonial literature. This was so not simply because both occupied the public sphere and were part of a strategic political goal, but also because his testimonial novels mostly appeared first as journalist notes in several magazines –mostly without the intention of being presented as literature to the readers. In Walsh's work, the formation of subjectivity appeared as a collective enterprise, in opposition to the aims of the established power for owning the memory and experience of the people. Collective memory became then a political category, a realm shared *intersubjectively* and a tool to recognise those popular sectors that were marginalised, persecuted and segregated. Walsh linked memory to history in a way that recalls Gramsci's and Benjamin's reflections on the matter, because, for Walsh, the disrupted nature of the subaltern's memory was the result of the work of the official narrators of history, and needed to be recomposed though a narrative that collected and ordered it. As we have seen, this defines Walsh's aesthetical-political goals of *testimonio* in bringing up the silences of history.[317] And this makes scholar Silvia Beatriz Adoue see in Walsh's work on history and memory the nature of the cryptographer, revealing the hidden *truth* under the "hegemonic tale".[318]

Thus, for him, neutrality was both impossible and undesirable, as it appeared as an accomplice of the oppressive hegemony. The act of searching for *truth*, especially a hidden, stolen or lost *truth*, is at the root of both journalism and history, even if it is impossible to achieve in definitive terms. And this demands a point of view towards reality and a call for responsibility that appears constantly in Walsh's work: collecting all points of view for the purpose of building a plurality does not mean that all of them are *true*. Thus, in the relationship between subject and narrator, it is necessary to *take sides*. The gap between *truth* and information, and the ethical inquiries this gap gives rise to, are complex aspects that belong to the realm of interpretation. But without commitment to *truth*, the so-called impartiality inhibits what American journalist Herbert L. Matthews sees as "the only aspects that really matter: honesty, understanding and rigour".[319] Walsh, who never pretended to appear as neutral, equidistant or objective, overcame –in Benjamin terms– his own *acedia* when he investigated the case that became *Operation Massacre*. He recognised publicly that when he first learned about the case, all he searched for was professional and individual recognition.[320] But all of a sudden he discovered a degree of injustice that led him to a different view, not just on power and politics,

317] See Grasselli, Fabiana and Salomone, Mariano 2011.

318] Adoue, Silvia Beatriz 2011, *Walsh, el Criptógrafo. Escritura y Acción Política en la Obra de Rodolfo Walsh*, Buenos Aires: Editorial El Colectivo and Dialektik, p. 15. (Translated by the author.) Adoue's metaphor is inspired by the fact that Walsh actually worked as a cryptographer, mainly in Cuba, where he decoded the cables that were preparing the invasion of The Bay of Pigs. See also García Márquez, Gabriel, 'Rodolfo Walsh: El Escritor que se Adelantó a la CIA', in Baschetti, Roberto (ed.) 1994, pp. 313-315.

319] Quoted in Serrano, Pascual 2011, *Contra la Neutralidad*, Barcelona: Península, p. 25. (All quotations from this publication are the author's translation.)

320] Aníbal Ford recalled that when he invited Walsh to the University of Buenos Aires in 1973 for an encounter with his students and he was asked about "the ideals that led him to write *Operation Massacre*", he openly replied: "Ideals? I wanted to be famous... win the Pulitzer... have money". Ford, Aníbal, 'Ese Hombre', in Lafforgue, Jorge (ed.) 2000, p. 11.

but also on journalism. His broken reliance on the expertise of the profession was expressed as follows:

> "It should be understood that I have lost some hopes. In justice, reparation, democracy... after all, in what once was my job, and it's not anymore".[321]

And this awakening, which changed his empathy and interest in the Other as a collective subject of history, drove him to a partisan responsibility towards the concept of *the real*, as he reflected upon the material forces that dominated social relationships:

> "*Operation Massacre* changed my life. Making it I understood that, in addition to my intimate perplexity, there was a threatening outside world".[322]

As for Walsh's style, Argentine writer and critic Osvaldo Bayer praises the brevity and clarity of it as accessible for any reader, and very especially for the working class used to detective stories.[323] For this same reason, Ángel Rama calls *Operation Massacre* "a police novel for the poor".[324] And in this regard, we could argue that Walsh uses generic standards of detective novels for transcending their own *commonsensical* limitations, in order to provide to the popular classes access to a transformation of the genre, as part of a wider political leap towards a new *good sense*. Piglia sees in the agile, efficient and direct characteristics of his style an exemplary case of a writer intervening in politics,[325] while Spanish writer Isaac Rosa appreciates Walsh's flowing, functional, dense, elaborated and yet popular "will for style" in managing time and space without suspending the action, becoming for him one of the finest authors in the Spanish language of the 20th century.[326] We could also add that the investigative journalist techniques that affected his style placed him in confrontation with the different institutions of hegemonic power, which ended up threatening his life. The subsequent profound political commitment that followed would not negatively affect the aesthetic qualities and rigour of his work, but rather would have the opposite effect. But these components are key to understanding how for many his figure became "the highest exponent of testimonial ... Latin American narrative".[327] His elaborated simplicity emphasised the communicative value of narrative, underlining the importance of producing meaning through it. His journalism then cannot be separated from his literary work,

321] Walsh, Rodolfo 2009, *Operación Masacre*, critical edition by Roberto Ferro, Buenos Aires: Ediciones de la Flor, p. 314. (All quotations from this publication are the author's translation.)
322] Walsh, Rodolfo, 'El Violento Oficio de Escritor', in Baschetti, Roberto (ed.) 1994, p. 31.
323] Bayer, Osvaldo, 'Rodolfo Walsh: Tabú y Mito', in Walsh, Rodolfo 2000, *Operación Masacre*, Buenos Aires: Ediciones de la Flor, p. 3.
324] Rama, Ángel, 'Las Novelas Policiales del Pobre', in Baschetti, Roberto (ed.) 1994, pp. 79-86.
325] Piglia, Ricardo, 2000.
326] Rosa, Isaac, 'Prólogo', in Walsh, Rodolfo 2010, ¿Quién Mató a Rosendo?, Madrid: 451 Editores, p. 13.
327] Duhalde, Eduardo Luis, 'Rodolfo Walsh: El Secuestrado 26.001', in Baschetti, Roberto (ed.) 1994, p. 320.

once the interaction between both *poetics* highlights the empathy towards the subaltern: the call for justice that *the real* demands. And thus, *the real* can affect the way the reader copes with *truth* –with the cognitive realm of meaning. When this involves a moral commitment, it can also activate resistance and rebellion towards what has been established as *true*.

Walsh's ideological motivation and moral judgement on the subject of history was never hidden or obscured by complicated intellectual games. During the last years of his life, Walsh took his political commitment to a higher level, joining two guerrilla movements –first FAP and later Montoneros. Communication had to become central to his writing in order to maintain his political role in these organisations, engaging actively in the social conflicts that defined human relationships within his context. His commitment to *truth* then became a critical partisan activity within reality. And within this process, his dilemma regarding objectivity got solved through practice. Thus, accompanying the deepening of his political commitment, as we have seen, Walsh got involved in the creation of journalist projects throughout his life –Prensa Latina, CGT, Noticias, ANCLA, Cadena Informativa–, in some of which he first published the notes that became his testimonial novels. With open counterhegemonic informative goals, these projects aimed at developing an alternative consensus around the material needs and interests of subaltern groups, bonding their practice to political agendas organically. It is key to underline the innovative value of these practices many decades before anything like Wikileaks had appeared. The committed crafty nature of some of these projects[328] inscribed them within a Latin American tradition of counter-information, which has existed from the days of independence to present times. [329] As they offered a qualitative way to avoid the obstacles presented by the hegemonic systems of information, journalist Natalia Vinelli notes that these experiences are particularly inspirational for any counterhegemonic project of information, like the press strategy of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) and other current alternative platforms and organisations seeking for social change.[330] Due to the critical role of information in forming opinion and forging consensus, for Walsh the rigour of these projects was something non-negotiable, as it was the key to their political efficiency within an unequal struggle against hegemony.[331]

As Serrano notes, through his rigorous work Walsh subverted the stigmatisation of subjectivism in journalism as well as he did with the established values of literature and its genres when questioning the essence of the bourgeois novel and

328] Mainly ANCLA –the clandestine news agency Walsh built with a small group of militants, which with very minimal resources elaborated news cables of hidden information confronting the tight censorship of the dictatorship– and Cadena Informativa, which he developed on his own.

329] See Walsh, Rodolfo, 'Los Documentos', in Baschetti, Roberto (ed.) 1994, p. 233 and 240. Also Vinelli, Natalia 2008, *ANCLA. Una Experiencia de Comunicación Clandestina Orientada por Rodolfo Walsh*, Buenos Aires: Editorial El Colectivo, pp. 96-105.

330] Vinelli, Natalia 2008, pp. 126-127.

331] See the three prologues written by Carlos Aznárez, Lucila Pagliai and Lila Pastoriza, the group Walsh coordinated in ANCLA, in Lotersztain, Cacho and Bufano, Sergio (eds.) 2012, *ANCLA. Rodolfo Walsh y la Agencia de Noticias Clandestina: 1976-1977*, Buenos Aires: Ejercitar la Memoria Editores, pp. 7-30.

Rodolfo Walsh with Eduardo Galeano and other friends in Cuba.

its potential for transformation. The representation of the Other and for the Other provided a different dimension to his practice: once activating and serving the goals of the subaltern for social change became central, illustrating events with an inventive linguistic narrative fashion became secondary, if not avoidable. Walsh's active commitment to and choice of historical subject frame Amy Goodman's views on the journalist's responsibility for going "where the silence is".[332]

Eduardo Galeano calls Walsh a "historian of his own time".[333] And when addressing the debates on genres in connection to Walsh's work, he criticises the work of those who draw the limits of different literary genres, calling them "the watchful custom officers separating the literature from its underworld", where journalism appears as "a suburb of the fine arts".[334] Galeano attributes this to "bourgeois thought, which fractures everything it touches", and wonders how this reliance on expertise and professionalisation could explain "that the best Argentine narrator of his generation was essentially a journalist?"[335] By suggesting that a journalist's use of literary techniques can make his narrative a finer vehicle to affect the audience than plain historical texts do, Galeano seems to agree with C. L. R. James, who praised the fact that "the traditionally famous historians have been more artist than scientist".[336] And thus, Galeano compares the relevance of Walsh's work to José Martí's, who mainly published in newspapers all his life, but time proved

332] Quoted in Serrano, Pascual 2011, p. 30.
333] Galeano, Eduardo, 'El Historiador de su Propio Tiempo', in Baschetti, Roberto (ed.) 1994, p. 324.
334] Ibid.
335] Ibid.
336] James, C.L.R. 1989, *The Black Jacobins*, New York: Vintage Books, pp. X.

his work stepped in *two times*: it "belonged to an instant, but also belonged to history".[337] Walsh, like Martí, appears as a "historian of his own time, protagonist and witness, who wrote ... to give testimony", pointing at "those responsible of the Argentine tragedy".[338]

As Jozami suggests, Walsh is an essential author for exploring the convulsive times that the Latin American intellectual went through –times that revolutionised cultural forms and practices as well as politics, and during which Walsh lived between "the word and the action". For Jozami, it is precisely this very unresolved tension what makes him so current today,[339] constantly revisited by new generations.[340] His influence on journalists and writers from Argentina –and the rest of Latin America– is notorious, as is proved by the work of some of his colleagues, like the investigative works of Horacio Verbitsky, testimonial novels like Miguel Bonasso's *Memory of the Death* (*Recuerdo de la Muerte*),[341] or complex testimonial approaches to recent Argentine history like Eduardo Anguita's and Martín Caparros' *The Will* (*La Voluntad*), just to name a few. In present times, when memory in Argentina has served to interrogate the established official history, the figure of Walsh emerges as critical for rethinking and reformulating both the literary and historical forms of its representation.

At the end of his life, while Walsh kept a critical attitude towards Montoneros' militarist strategy, yet without abandoning the guerrilla organisation,[342] he withdrew from the repressive situation of Buenos Aires to San Vicente, a small city near the capital. As his wife Lilia Ferreyra recalls, there he was proud to recover his name, which meant writing again with his real name and also addressing other projects that included a return to fiction literature.[343] On the first anniversary of the coup d'état of the Junta, March 24, 1977, and due to a bet with his wife, Walsh finished writing two works: a short story titled *Juan was Leaving by the River* (*Juan se Iba por el Río*) and arguably his best known denunciation, the *Open Letter of a Writer to the Military Junta*.[344] Considered by Gabriel García Márquez as a "masterpiece of Latin American journalism"[345] the *Open Letter...* is a rigorous document on the cruel nature of the dictatorship, underlining the intimate bond between the criminal repression and the undemocratic economic plans. This thesis inspired Naomi Klein to write on how Walsh's notion preceded her insights on the undemocratic essence

337] Galeano, Eduardo, in Baschetti, Roberto (ed.) 1994, p.324.
338] Ibid., 324-325.
339] Jozami, Eduardo 2006, *Rodolfo Walsh. La Palabra y la Acción*, first edition, Buenos Aires: Norma, pp. 14-16.
340] See for instance Montero, Hugo and Portela, Ignacio 2010, *Rodolfo Walsh. Los Años Montoneros*, Buenos Aires: Ediciones Continente.
341] Due to this testimonial novel, in 2011 Bonasso was called to testify as witness in court during one of the trials related to the repression of the last Argentine dictatorship. See: http://www.lacapital.com.ar/ed_impresa/2011/9/edicion_1056/contenidos/noticia_5140.html
342] See Walsh, Rodolfo, in Baschetti, Roberto (ed.) 1994, pp. 206-240.
343] See Ferreyra, Lilia, 'Rigor e Inteligencia en la Vida de Rodolfo Walsh', in Baschetti, Roberto (ed.) 1994, pp. 195-201.
344] Walsh, Rodolfo, 'Carta Abierta de un Escritor a la Junta Militar', in Baschetti, Roberto (ed.) 1994, pp. 241-253. A translation in English of the *Open Letter...*, as well as some other texts by Walsh, can be found in McCaughan, Michael 2002, *True Crimes: Rodolfo Walsh. The Life and Times of a Radical Intellectual*, London: Latin America Bureau, pp. 284-290.
345] García Márquez, Gabriel, in Baschetti, Roberto (ed.) 1994, p. 315.

of neoliberal economics in *The Shock Doctrine*.[346] For Piglia the *Open Letter...* unites Walsh's *two poetics* at its best: on one hand the first-person voice of *true* testimony and accusation, and on the other hand the elliptical mastery inherited from his fictional techniques.[347]

Walsh was ambushed, killed and disappeared the day after finishing these two works, when he went to deliver the *Open Letter...* before meeting some comrades in Buenos Aires. The night after the tragic events, the army broke into his house in San Vicente, also disappearing many of his writings, including the finished version of *Juan was Leaving by the River*, which was never recovered. Nevertheless, his *Open Letter...* reached its addressees –which included national and international journalists and media– and helped to break the informative siege, making his testimony public. For years after, many copied and passed the *Open Letter...* from hand to hand, and thus it became one of the most significant symbols of the resistance against the military dictatorship. Walsh, who used to say that "to write is to listen", closed the text with the following words:

> "These are the thoughts I wanted to send the Junta members on the first anniversary of your ill-fated government, without hope of being listened to, with the certainty of being persecuted, but true to the commitment I took up a long time ago to give testimony in difficult times".[348]

CONCLUSION

One of the main aspects that defined this period was the idea of a Latin America that was constructed, deeply influenced by historical and political circumstances. The geopolitical configuration of the Cold War and the emergence of the Third World emphasised the transnational solidarity between these regions, while also underscoring the national and popular specificity of the local Other. This scene called for new literary forms to represent the era: the cultural accruing of narratives should reunite the dialectics and complex social *intersubjectivity* of the times. The relationship with Cuba, the role of literature and writer in society, its connection to hegemony and the limits of artistic creativity, its norms and institutions, and the overvaluation of politics to legitimate the cultural production, privileged the public space, which became essential to transforming writers into intellectuals. This was notably in tune with the revolutionary hopes and the increasing strength of progressive forces within the cultural elites, as well as with the shift towards new cultural agents and social actors. Thus, we have to inscribe the debates that gave birth to testimonial literature as a genuine Latin American literary form within these explorations between literature and politics in the search for the *appropriate form*.

346] See Klein, Naomi 2008, *The Shock Doctrine*, New York: Metropolitan Books, pp. 94-97.
347] Piglia, Ricardo, in Lafforgue, Jorge (ed.) 2000, p. 14.
348] Walsh, Rodolfo, in Baschetti, Roberto (ed.) 1994, p. 253.

What can *testimonio* provide today to the forms of historical representation that aim at transgressing other dominant forms in a totally different social context, arguably more conformist, where production and reception have been largely atomised? *Testimonio* offers a practical approach to the narrative of *historytelling* meant to shift the subject of history towards the Other and "seize hold of its memory", through an open dialogue with the expressions of the popular and the local. Thus, exploring *intersubjective* subaltern experiences becomes crucial for confronting other forms of official historical narratives. We could argue that as a type of *generic transformation* in practice this approach suggests a dialectical leap from *common sense* to *good sense* –from an established form of communication as genre to a challenging narrative for production and reception that both uses dominant generic schemes and subverts them, motivating the critical audience to interrogate and problematise aspects of communication and knowledge, and potentially acting against them. Thus, the narrator-intellectual, capable of recognising the conformist limitations of popular culture as folklore, searches for alternative ways to connect with the local experience of people's resistance, serving the counterhegemonic purposes of the subaltern.

As a trans-generic form that transgressed the map of literary genres, *testimonio* meant a challenge to the notion of expertise. The relevance of witnessing and memory, opposed to the immaculate academicism of the professional historian, interrogates the construction of objectivity, replacing it with the collective subjectivity of the subaltern. New subjects of history, traditionally marginalised, appear defying the official history and its realm of *truth*, knowledge and reality. As we will see, we can agree on the fact that Latin American testimonial literature shares with its filmic counterpart its aims for historicity, politicisation, critical commitment and cultural specificity.[349] Both cultural practices are concerned with the tension between realism and avant-gardism, between communicability and legibility, seeking for a balanced and successful work that can both inscribe itself in the realm of the popular while challenging the conformist forms and genres that are established hegemonically. Yet today these are current and pertinent characteristics of any cultural proposal meant to surpass the hegemonic forms of representation. And these are also essential aspects to confronting the discredited features of the biopic as a genre that simply mythologises real lives, tending to universalise ahistorically. Exploring the links between cultural practices like testimonial literature and Third Cinema serves to propose a critical dialogue with dominant narrative forms, like the biopic, within an artistic tradition of transgressing genres or *generic transformation*.

329] These notions are taken from Mike Wayne's study on Third Cinema, that we explore in depth in the following chapter. See Wayne, Mike 2001, *Political Film. The Dialectics of Third Cinema*, London and Sterling: Pluto Press.

CHAPTER 4

THIRD CINEMA: FILMMAKING AS A REVOLUTIONARY PRAXIS

This chapter aims to explore the features and contributions of Third Cinema, as part of the New Latin American Cinema wave, that make it remain current and valuable for inspiring today's counterhegemonic narrative representations, especially filmic ones. Thus, it serves as a theoretical and practical framework for the development of those movements aimed at challenging the limitations of generic forms and transforming them. The study of Third Cinema as a cultural practice of the subaltern complements the notions and reflections introduced regarding Latin American testimonial literature. And in this sense, tracing a bridge between these two practices intimately related to the shared historical context of which they are products, we

attempt to prove that they both offer a rich and heterogeneous approach to inquiries regarding how cultural practices can produce a counterhegemonic, politically committed, locally specific and popular response to the dominant forms of cultural representation. And thus, in connection with the contributions of Gramsci, Fanon or Benjamin on this matter, we explore these two forms of expression in relation to the need for a shift from *common sense* to *good sense* and the search for *forms appropriate* for the success of this goal, while interrogating the role of the intellectual throughout the whole process.

This chapter explores the main characteristics of the New Latin American Cinema movement, as well as the historical environment and major cultural and theoretical influences that shaped this phenomenon, many of which are common to *testimonio* and already introduced in the previous chapter. We will then study the original notion of Third Cinema as part of this wave, which was first introduced by Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino in their manifesto *Towards a Third Cinema* (*Hacia un Tercer Cine*) as a reflection of their experiences with their seminal film *The Hour of the Furnaces* (*La Hora de los Hornos*, 1968), and mirrored both the dominant pan-Latin American and Third Worldist mentality and the efforts to unite artistic and political activities. Then we examine the establishment of the notion and its impact within the Third World cultural scene, favouring international encounters of filmmakers from these regions, promoting the emergence of institutional entities and empowering the collaboration between these agents. It is then necessary to follow the reformulation and expansion of the concept and the polemics it provoked, especially in the environment of subaltern studies in the UK. Therefore, we later focus on the recent contributions of British scholar Mike Wayne to the study of Third Cinema practice as a revolutionary praxis from a Marxist dialectical methodology. Thanks to his explorations of the topic and Cuban filmmaker Tomás Gutiérrez Alea's important reflections on an alternative film theory, practice and aesthetics, the last part of the chapter is dedicated to the potential for the proposal to stimulate contemporary and counterhegemonic narrative forms of representation.

Out of these observations, a series of questions arise at the end: can we subvert the genuine forms of mainstream cinema by referring to the contributions of counterhegemonic cultural experiences like Third Cinema or testimonial literature? Can we develop alternative forms of representation within the *grey areas* left between hegemonic and subaltern cultural practices to join the struggles of the subaltern? What lies beneath this current proposal of *generic transformation*, which is also somehow related to Walsh's literary explorations, is that it tries to respond to how the subaltern can be represented in established forms, taking advantage of their popular characteristics to affect massive audiences and create alternative narratives that might eventually transgress dominant *conceptions of the world*. In this regard, exploring the possibilities of expanding Wayne's notion of *generic transformation* while considering the positive time-saving and *commonsensical* features of genres, as well as their massive communicative and cognitive values, helps to challenge the genre's boundaries dialectically. And this serves to access popular sectors and to suggest a leap towards *good sense*, which might engage alternative narratives

with the struggles of the subaltern. We must then critically examine the positive aspects of genres in order to explore ways for transforming them appropriately. Conditioned by their specific historical context, both Third Cinema and *testimonio* –as forms of representation that also became forms of action, or in harmony with Walsh's reflections on the novel as a form that should move from representation to active presentation– were cultural practices that transformed and transgressed dominant forms by negotiating dialectically with them instead of rejecting them. It is actually this very dialectical position that made them efficient and permeable to the representational needs of the subaltern, and what remains today as the great inspirational contribution for current alternative narrative forms.

THE NEW LATIN AMERICAN CINEMA WAVE

Third Cinema, a term coined in 1969 after the seminal manifesto *Towards a Third Cinema* by Argentine filmmakers Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, originally appeared as part of a wider Latin American film wave. Due to characteristics it shared with the new forms of writing emerging within the literary field, the film practices of this phenomenon were coined as the New Latin American Cinema. As professor Ana M. López asserts, the crisis of the local film industry in the late 50's in places like Argentina, Chile or Brazil, along with the triumph of the Cuban Revolution, which made the island the first place to develop "a new cinematic culture on a national scale",[350] favoured the rising and establishing of new cinematic movements. In addition to prominent figures of new Cuban cinema such as Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, Julio García Espinosa or Santiago Álvarez, we can also mention as precursors of this movement the names of Fernando Birri and the Documentary School of Santa Fe in Argentina, the Cinema Novo of Brazil with figures like Glauber Rocha, Joaquim Pedro de Andrade or Nelson Pereira dos Santos, and Jorge Sanjinés in Bolivia.

As in literature, new public spaces such as film clubs, societies, magazines and festivals modernised the bond with new audiences, affecting the intellectual aspects of the medium and immersing it within the ongoing popular debates. This helped to configure the idea of a New Latin American Cinema, as López exposes:

> "Throughout the continent in nations as radically different as Argentina, Bolivia, and Cuba the cinema's role in society and its relationship to the continent's struggle for liberation were redefined in the late 1950s and 1960s. By 1968 or 1969, the cinema of Latin America could rightly be called the New Latin American Cinema, a pan-Latin American cinematic movement dedicated to the people of the continent and their struggle for cultural, political, and economic autonomy".[351]

350] López, Ana M., 'An "Other" History: The New Latin American Cinema', in Sklar, Robert and Musser, Charles (eds.) 1990, *Resisting Images. Essays on Cinema and History*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, p. 309.
351] Ibid.

Therefore, the collective goal became to create a pan-Latin American cinema for the liberation strugglethat was taking place at that time. Culture, where *intersubjective* identities are formed, was an essential concern in the construction of a new and liberated identity. For this purpose, the conflicts of Latin American people were central to these films. The Cuban revolutionary process was again both an inspiration and engine for this movement, due to the decisive investment of the island in institutions –such as ICAIC or the prestigious International Festival of New Latin American Cinema of Havana– that would serve these goals.

As Argentine sociologist and film director Susana Velleggia asserts, the New Latin American Cinema shared with other alternative film practices the will to fight the Hollywood standards of cinema as a spectacle and develop new industrial structures and aesthetical solutions, substituting *verisimilitude* for *authenticity*.[352] Aiming at forging a cultural manifestation for the subaltern, its deeply politicised commitment and counterhegemonic goals defined the unity of the movement, which sought alternative ways to modify the communicative and cognitive aspects of the medium in the realms of production, consumption and reception. Again, the point of encounter between revolutionary culture and politics led to facing hegemony and its subsequent forms of representation in cinema. It was necessary to rethink them fully and reconsider the social function of institutionalised notions such as genre, as well as the modes of production connected to the film industry. López names Italian Neo-Realism and its shift towards historically marginalised protagonists, as well as its more artisanal modes of production in contrast to Hollywood's, as a major influence.[353] Velleggia also mentions the inspiring effect of the French *nouvelle vague* of Truffaut and Godard, the Soviet cinema of Eisenstein, Pudovkin and Vertov, as well as the *Cinéma Verité* of Jean Rouch and the documentary work of Joris Ivens and Chris Marker.[354]

Regarding the rich theoretical lineages of Third Cinema, in tune with the observations of other authors, British professor and film theorist Paul Willemen names the relevant influences of Brecht, particularly concerning the liberating potential of reason, and Benjamin, especially regarding his notion of *dialectic image*.[355] And in this sense, Willemen believes that other reflections on the *culture industries* and the avant-garde in this cinema mirror the debates between Adorno and Benjamin, once

> "it makes sense for the Latin American avant gardes to emphasize lucidity and the cognitive aspects of cultural work, thus reversing the hierarchy between the cognitive and the emotive, while of course maintaining the need to involve both".[356]

352] Velleggia, Susana 2009, *La Máquina de la Mirada*, Buenos Aires: Editorial Altamira: pp. 170-171. (All quotations from this publication are the author's translation.)
353] López, Ana M., in Sklar, Robert and Musser, Charles (eds.) 1990, pp. 311-312.
354] Velleggia, Susana 2009, p. 170.
355] Willemen, Paul 1987, 'The Third Cinema Question. Notes and Reflection', *Framework*, 34, pp. 17-19.
356] Ibid., p. 20.

Otherwise, in addition to names as significant as Edward Said in problematising the construction of subaltern cultural identities and Soviet cultural contributions, Willemen also focuses on the influence of Soviet theoretician Mikhail Bakhtin and his notion of *chronotope*, as well as dialogue and otherness, for revisiting the link between Third Cinema and Third World Cinema and its possibilities to expand the practice beyond the unclear limits of the Third World.[357] Besides the key support provided by Cuba to revolutionary artistic practices in the Third World, British scholar and media critic Mike Wayne, author of one of the most recent efforts in revisiting the contributions of this cinema from a dialectical-historical materialist approach, names a series of Marxist thinkers from the 20's and 30's as major precursors: Eisenstein and Vertov –for their usage of image, camera angles and montage for communication and dialectical understanding, and their revolutionary approach to storytelling and radical historicity based on masses over individuals–, Georg Lukács –for his theory of realism, though his criticism of modernism would be problematic–, and Bertolt Brecht –in dialectical conflict with Lukács–, and his influence on Benjamin.[358] We could also add, as in *testimonio*, that the trace of Gramsci and Fanon's contributions are particularly significant for both practices. We could argue that this appears clear when interrogating some of the aspects related to the notion of the national-popular, the relevance of memory in the forging of historical thinking and *intersubjective* subaltern identities or the role of the intellectual in the awakening of critical consciousness, especially as an organic entity capable of moving from the established *common sense* to an emancipatory *good sense* in the realm of culture as folklore.

Emphasis on national and popular specificity was an important factor in the works of the New Latin American Cinema, which served to expand the idea of the need for social change. Underlining the local differences between Latin American nations and its people played a critical part in encouraging the solidary, unity and hope for change within the region, rooted in its historically chronic dependence and poverty. As in the literary field, the national-popular notion favoured a transnational solidarity among those who identified with the subaltern. López illustrates how this union was "not limited to the desire for nationalist expression" in order to confront the Hollywood entertainment model, but on the contrary

> "the New Latin American Cinema is a political cinema committed to praxis and to the socio-political investigation and transformation of the underdevelopment that characterizes Latin America. It is thus one that cannot be properly understood in isolation from political, social, economic, cultural, and aesthetic forces".[359]

357] Ibid., pp. 21-23.
358] Wayne, Mike 2001, *Political Film. The Dialectics of Third Cinema*, London and Sterling: Pluto Press, pp. 33-46.
359] López, Ana M., in Sklar, Robert and Musser, Charles (eds.) 1990, pp. 309-310.

National identity needed to be constructed culturally according to people's liberation aims and in opposition to foreign dominance that imposed a cultural representation of reality distant from the local and popular identities. López asserts that in this film wave

> "cinema is understood as part of a process of cultural renovation that, by making visible the specificity of particular social situations (the national context) will produce a critical understanding of social reality".[360]

The national and the popular needed to be constantly defined and protected critically in order to both construct and renovate the collective identity of the subaltern. As Velleggia notes, the *people* became the protagonist of the stories projected on the screen, avoiding the conception of film as a plain spectacle.[361] Thus, we can examine the proximity between the notions of this practice and those studied in its literary counterpart. Even if the Marxian concept of class struggle appeared as crucial in these cultural manifestations, the focus on local particularities was again affirmed as a central strategy for surpassing the interests of specific groups. Based on the common elements that depicted Latin American conflictive societies, this very strategy could serve to achieve a transnational solidarity that might expand the revolutionary agenda. In harmony with Gramsci's notions, López states that

> "the national became contextualized and articulated in relation to a "popular" and a "political" that exceeded the boundaries of exclusively national concerns and increasingly became Latin American".[362]

All the different forms of cultural expression that made up this wave offered a counterhegemonic agenda for social change linked to the revolutionary politics that concurrently became dominant among the intellectuals of the region. Sharing the aim for cultural decolonisation and national emancipation –as influenced by Fanon's work– and in contrast with Hollywood's hegemony, they saw in cinema a powerful tool for political awakening due to its capacity to reach mass audiences. López notes that, as part of this process, the call for consciousness-raising –*toma de conciencia*– became constant, emphasising the pedagogical role of culture.[363] Thus, cinema joined with other cultural practices that shared similar concerns regarding the struggle for social change in Latin America, identifying itself with the *intersubjective* battles of the subaltern. Underlining the collective and its memory offered an open stage for the wide variety of proposals aiming "to create an "other" cinema with "other" social effects as a prerequisite of its principal goal to reveal and analyse

360] Ibid., p. 314.
361] Velleggia, Susana 2009, p. 171.
362] López, Ana M., in Sklar, Robert and Musser, Charles (eds.) 1990, p. 320.
363] Ibid.

"reality""[364] –a reality dominated by a persisting dependency that condemned the region to its dramatic inequality.

The opening of the film field to the specific historical, social and political conditions of each country and its popular struggles diversified the cultural proposals, opposing both the homogeneous universal understanding of drama and aesthetics of Hollywood mainstream cinema and the European-based elitist aspects of *auteur* cinema. Thus, the role of filmmakers as intellectuals was fully questioned: given the conflictive circumstances of the region, it was unacceptable to act as either an extension of the established *culture industries* or as an individual genius isolated from the surrounding mundane world. Velleggia observes that the Gramscian notion of *organic intellectual* became essential to debates on the role of filmmakers, which they optimistically thought should serve the consciousness-raising of the *people*, as the *people* were seen as the *intersubjective* agent called to subvert the social order that oppressed them, presumably through revolutionary methods. Society was not discussed as an objective and fixed reality *per se*, but as a collective construction subject to dialectical formulations and reformulations –a fragmented and flexible realm that can and must be understood and transformed *intersubjectively*. Analysing and interpreting reality appeared as an active enterprise for both filmmakers and spectators, and thus *taking sides* was unavoidable. Neutrality was not an option. On the contrary, the position of these films towards reality, as representations of specific ethical and political views, avoided any sort of ambiguity.[365]

Regarding the intervention of filmmakers within the debates of the intellectual scene, a series of manifestoes accompanied the emergence of the movement, appearing independently from one another. Throughout the whole region, the manifesto became a common form for filmmakers to deal with the relationship between their work and the social and political context that surrounded them. In a move similar to the one made by Latin American writers, this brought the filmmaker into the realm of the intellectual. As film scholar Scott L. Baugh notes, the major foundational manifestoes shared their criticism and scepticism towards the capitalist diagnostics and economic *desarrollismo* or developmentalism, which failed to solve the problems of the region through the policies boosted in countries like Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Uruguay or Chile.[366] Baugh believes that "[t]he inclination to read the New Latin American Cinema manifestoes as militant and revolutionary in line with the socialist movements in Latin America is reductive", and instead revisiting them "historicizes the capitalist-imperialist theories of development and dependency in Latin American culture".[367] Thus, we can argue that these manifestoes are not simply documents relevant to ex-

364] Ibid., p. 311.
365] Velleggia, Susana 2009, pp. 169-170.
366] Baugh, Scott L. 2004, 'Manifesting La Historia: Systems of 'Development' and the New Latin American Cinema Manifesto', *Film and History*, 34, 1, pp. 56-65. Baugh focuses on Glauber Rocha's *An Aesthetics of Hunger* (1965), Fernando Birri's *Cinema and Underdevelopment* (1967), Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino's *Towards a Third Cinema* (1969), Julio García Espinosa's *For an Imperfect Cinema* (1970), and Jorge Sanjinés' *Problems of Form and Content in Revolutionary Cinema* (1976). These and other manifestoes can be found in Velleggia, Susana 2009 and Chanan, Michael (ed.) 1983, *Twenty Five Years of the New Latin American Cinema*, London: British Film Institute/Channel Four.
367] Baugh, Scott L. 2004, p. 62.

ploring these practices in the past tense, but also significant cultural and intellectual interventions for re-evaluating the current validity of the debates they proposed.[368] As Baugh concludes, in harmony with the inquiries on modernity within the literary field,

> "Considering the formative New Latin American Cinema manifestoes and their critique of "modern" conceptions of Latin America relates aspects of the global region's (hi)story that have been left untold and provides insight to the operative methods of revolution and development in Latin America".[369]

To conclude, as a cultural practice, the New Latin American Cinema movement attempted to respond to a series of concerns related to those examined regarding the literary scene. Similarly, we can also consider this film wave in connection with several Gramscian notions explored throughout this study, as both practices were conceived of as counterhegemonic cultural expressions of the subaltern, aimed at confronting the established and formulaic cultural hegemony. This approach necessarily called for a shift in the subject of their stories, which consequently meant also a shift in the subject of history and the forms for representing it. But that was not the only change that these movements introduced. Questioning the social role of the intellectual, its public voice and visibility –as expressed in public interventions in magazines or by publishing of manifestoes– served to expose both an active political and an aesthetical revolutionary aim. Therefore, we can see both practices as proposing a leap from *common sense* to *good sense* within their intellectual activity, by rethinking the dominant forms of representation, their cognitive and communicative values, and also searching for alternative ways to channel them according to their emancipatory goals. These objectives, linked to other concurrent practices for social change, demanded a dialectical relationship to hegemony. Rejecting the dialogue with hegemony seemed inefficient, as it would cut ties with the popular sectors. Instead, as *good sense* relates to *common sense* and originates from it, these proposals sought the positive values of the hegemonic forms of representation that could favour their massive communicative and cognitive potential, in order to effectively reach a wider popular audience. Then, transforming these *forms appropriately* according to the needs of the struggles of the subaltern could eventually subvert hegemony and its dominant *conceptions of the world*. As a tendency shared with the literary field, this cinema interrogated the role of the filmmaker as intellectual throughout the whole process and paid special attention to the specificities of the national and the popular. As a result, López describes the practice as follows:

> "A cinema designed to subvert, demystify, and challenge the dominant cinema, common-sensical developmental assumptions, and political givens is marginal almost by definition and not particularly concerned with com-

368] See for instance the work on modernity, *coloniality* and Latin America of the Grupo Modernidad/Colonialidad, which includes Enrique Dussel, Walter Mignolo and Aníbal Quijano, or others like Jorge Larraín's.
369] Baugh, Scott L. 2004, p. 62.

> mercial imperatives. However, to make the national cinema strong, to encourage sustained production, and to maintain and raise popular interest in the cinema: these are all concerns of the New Latin American Cinema that cannot be addressed from the margins but that demand discussion in the context of mainstream national cinematic production, state protection of the national cinema, and the cinema's commercial or popular potential".[370]

In harmony with the political environment in Latin America and other latitudes of the Third World, all of these elements were present throughout this broad film movement that shook the region.

ON THE ORIGINAL NOTION OF THIRD CINEMA

As we have seen, Third Cinema appeared first in filmmakers Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino's manifesto, *Towards a Thrid Cinema*, subtitled *Notes and Experiences on the Development of a Cinema of Liberation in the Third World*.[371] Solanas and Getino were two of the heads of the Argentine film collective Grupo Cine Liberación, and published the text originally in the Cuban magazine Tricontinental.[372] In it they reflected on their film *The Hour of the Furnaces* (1968) and its strong social, political and cultural influence in Argentina, despite the censorship suffered under the military dictatorship that had been ruling the country since 1966. The title paid tribute to the last public statement of Che Guevara, his *Message to the Tricontinental* in 1967, in which he quoted the verses of Martí: "It is the hour of the furnaces and only the light shall be seen". The filmmakers worked on the film for two years under semi-clandestine conditions in collaboration with Peronist groups and smuggled out the negatives to finish it in Italy. Robert Stam notes that it was realised "in the interstices of the system and against the system ... independent in production, militant in politics, and experimental in language".[373] The result was a straightforward "ideological and political film-essay", as Solanas labelled when interviewed by Jean-Luc Godard,[374] that combined a wide variety of styles with a clear pedagogical purpose –a more than four-hour-long "poetic celebratrion of the

370] López, Ana M., in Sklar, Robert and Musser, Charles (eds.) 1990, p. 325.

371] We have used the copy Solanas, Fernando and Getino, Octavio, 'Hacia un Tercer Cine', in Velleggia, Susana 2009, pp. 264-289.

372] The magazine was founded during the Tricontinental Conference in Havana in 1966 by the OSPAAAL organisation and became an emblematic publication for the Left and Third Worldist movement, As Eshun and Gray note, it was published simultaneously in Spanish, French, English and Italian, and thus "[t]he multilingual form of the Tricontinental journal was understood as an intervention into the languages of colonial Europe in order to forge new solidarities with Third World internationalism". Eshun, Kodwo and Gray, Ros 2011, 'The Militant Image: A Ciné-Geography', *Third Text*, 25, 1, p. 4.

373] Stam, Robert, 'The Hour of the Furnaces and the Two Avant-Gardes', in Burton, Julianne (ed.) 1990, *The Social Documentary in Latin America*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, p. 253.

374] A translation of the conversation in English was published by the organisations DocTruck and Red Channels in a free and limited edition zine/reader distributed for the occasion of the screening of *The Hour of the Furnaces* in New York in 2010. 'Godard on Solanas, Solanas on Godard', *Resurrecting a Revolutionary Cinema. The Hour of the Furnaces*, 4th April 2010, pp. 30-35.

Fernando Solanas, Juan Domingo Perón and Octavio Getino.

Argentine nation, ... "epic" in the classical as well as the Brechtian sense".[375] When released in the US, American film critic Vincent Canby called it "a polemical epic, an essay film of a political, cinematic and psychological complexity unlike anything I've ever seen" and "a unique exploration of a nation's soul".[376] Professor and documentary filmmaker Michael Chanan describes it as

> "a militant poetic epic tapestry ... ranging from didacticism to operatic stylisation, direct filming to the techniques of advertising, and incorporating photographs, newsreel, testimonial footage and film clips –from avant-garde and mainstream, fiction and documentary".[377]

The authors referred to it as a *film act*, and Solanas also talked of a film-book, due to the information, titles and pedagogical form and its narrative structure constructed with prologue, chapters and epilogue.[378] As an act, it could be stopped for discussions and debates in revolutionary meetings, as it was mainly used within the left wing of the Peronist movement. This aimed at disrupting the conventional relationship between film and spectator, affecting his political foundations. The viewer was then called to reflect and act instead of just being a passive observer, as evidenced by the motto on display at some of the screenings "every spectator is either a coward or a traitor" from Fanon. The screenings were clandestine until 1973, when democratic

375] Stam, Robert, in Burton, Julianne (ed.) 1990, p. 253.
376] Canby, Vincent, 'Argentine Epic', *New York Times*, 26th February 1971, available in: http://www.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=9906E0DB1530E73BBC4E51DFB466838A669EDE
377] Chanan, Michael 1997, 'The Changing Geography of Third Cinema', *Screen*, Special Latin American Issue, 38, 4, pp. 372-388. We have used the net copy, available in: https://roehampton.openrepository.com/roehampton/bitstream/10142/49679/1/thirdcinema.pdf
378] 'Godard on Solanas, Solanas on Godard' 2010, p. 30.

elections were re-established in the country and, after 18 years of being banned, the Peronists got back in power. Nevertheless, fifty copies circulated before that and Solanas and Getino estimated the film had about one hundred thousand viewers.[379]

Besides reflecting on these experiences, the text also established a framework for approaching the political film scene that appeared in Latin America after the Cuban Revolution and its relationship with the different emergent revolutionary movements. As we have seen, Cuba's promotion and empowerment of revolutionary cultural institutions and exchanges helped to maintain an inspiring vision of the revolution, not only among the intellectuals of the region, but also within those from Africa and Asia related to the Third Worldist wave. Solanas and Getino's manifesto was filled with references to Che Guevara, Fanon, Mao and the Vietnam war, while also containing resonances from the local Peronist movement. In these pages, they reflected on how film was related to consumption in colonial and neo-colonial societies, understood as a product of entertainment: "a film of effects, instead of a film of causes".[380] The text offered a series of proposals for disrupting the dominant models of production, distribution and exhibition and developing an alternative approach to what was seen as an imposition by the bourgeois. Inspired by Guevara's concept of the *new man*, Solanas and Getino demanded a new and revolutionary attitude from filmmakers to confront the situation and "contribute to the possibility of the revolution".[381]

As we explored above, Solanas and Getino were not the first ones in the Latin American film scene to cope with these issues. The directors of Brazilian Cinema Novo, the filmmakers of the Revolutionary Cuban cinema and Argentine director Birri had been dealing with similar themes before. But the importance of *Towards a Third Cinema* relied not only on the cultural debates of the time that it reflected, but also on the establishment of a term that would far exceed the particular circumstances of its context to constitute a field of study of film theory and practice still pertinent today.

The text strongly underscored the role of the artist and intellectual in the process of liberation –something that would enrich their labour during a critical time calling for revolutionary solutions. As art appeared as something related to both national-popular conflicts and class struggles, they underlined the link between art and politics, as well as the artist's responsibility to history. The potentially alienating threat of culture as industry, its ideological foundation and connection to politics necessarily related the text to the concerns of the Frankfurt School, and mainly to those from the negative and positive aesthetics of Adorno and Benjamin respectively. As in the inquiries of the literary field, we can think about the bond between Gramsci's reflections on culture and hegemony and the manifesto's belief that culture can prepare civil society for the need for revolutionary changes. We can also argue about Gramsci's influence in the manifesto's interrogation of the role of

379] Chanan, Michael 1997.
380] Solanas, Fernando and Getino, Octavio, in Velleggia, Susana 2009, p. 264.
381] Ibid., p. 265.

the intellectual, the relevance of the national-popular and *commonsensical* culture as folklore, and the suggested leap to pushing beyond a conformist *common sense* cultural product to create a revolutionary *good sense* cultural weapon. Nevertheless, the text translated these questions through a special focus on the aspects of colonial imperialism, attuned with Fanon's theoretical contributions. Thus, as liberating national culture from the dominance of external and political hegemony was the main goal of Third Cinema, the manifesto mirrored Fanon's influence in its focus on the struggle for decolonisation as "the most gigantic cultural, scientific and artistic manifestation".[382] Besides the fact that both practices were related historically, culturally, politically and socially in various ways, the emphasis on the potential of film to become an "astonishing political act" connects the aims of Third Cinema to Walsh's effort in linking testimonial literature and political action organically.

Solanas and Getino defined Third Cinema in confrontation with what they called First and Second Cinema. The concept made an analogy with the term Third World, as they underlined in the subtitle of the manifesto, in harmony with the Third Worldist spirit of the Non-Aligned movement that opposed the First and Second Worlds. This is notably relevant as both the notions of pan-Latin Americanism and Third Worldism matched the tides of intercontinental solidarity and political action that were spreading throughout the underdeveloped regions that these cultural practices embraced. And, as we have seen, the importance of the Tricontinental Conference in 1966 in Havana that led to the establishment of OSPAAAL and its magazine Tricontinental served this purpose.[383] As for the particular case of Argentina, many had claimed the specific character of Peronism as a movement historically confronting the two dominant models of the First and Second Worlds. Sensitive to the increasing revolutionary movement of Argentine workers and students, inspired by the history of Peronism but also by the impact of Cuba on new generations, the authors saw in the Peronist doctrine a local political program to build a sovereign national and popular social order outside any hegemonic bloc. They argued that a revolutionary Peronism could not just join, but could even lead the legitimate causes of the Third World regions.[384]

Nevertheless, Solanas and Getino did not see Third Cinema as belonging exclusively to the Third World, but instead as the dialectical result of historical times marked by movements of liberation such as the Cuban Revolution, the Vietnam

382] Ibid., p. 267.

383] Solanas and Getino underlined the importance of OSPAAAL because, along with other organisations that "employ[ed] films for political-cultural ends" in Latin American, such as the Chilean Socialist Party, it also participated "in the production and distribution of films that contribut[ed] to the anti-imperialist struggle". In ibid., 275-276.

384] As Mestman notes, Solanas and Getino saw in the Peronist working class the historical subject that should lead the revolutionary transformation of Argentina, shifting from a traditional understanding of the left to what would be called the *national left*, reached via Peronism, in harmony with the discussions carried in the Tricontinental conference of Havana and the Third Worldism that was developed from Fanon's notions. See Mestman, Mariano, 'La Exhibición del Cine Militante. Teoría y Práctica en el Grupo Cine Liberación (Argentina)', in Fernández Colorado, Luis (ed.) 2001, *Cuadernos de la Academia*, 9 (Actas del VIII Congreso de la AEHC), Madrid: Academia de la Artes y las Ciencias Cinematográficas de España, pp. 443-463, and Mestman, Mariano 1999, '"La Hora de los Hornos", el Peronismo y la imagen del "Che"', *Secuencias*, 10, pp. 52-61,

war, the Algerian independence, the student struggles that peaked in 1968 or the anti-segregation actions in the US. Chanan notes that this explains the rhetorical emphasis of Third Cinema between the camera and the gun –as in the notion of *guerrilla filmmaking*, where the camera appeared not just as a weapon used to film reality, but to intervene in it. This reformulated the usage of terms like avant-garde in ways similar to the original military metaphor established in France back in the 19th century.[385] As in the case of the literary debates, this was linked to the increasing proliferation of revolutionary armed groups in Latin America. And in this regard, Stam notices that *The Hour of the Furnaces* actually represents a fine combination of the two struggles of the avant-garde in finding the *appropriate form*: the political –in its militant commitment– and the cultural –in its radical renovation of forms.[386]

For Solanas and Getino, First Cinema referred to dominant commercial cinema. It first appeared as entertainment for the popular classes and even channelled progressive ideas, but soon was controlled by the Hollywood industry, imposing models on every aspect, including length, exhibition and distribution. This cinema is not only made in the First World. On the contrary, most countries produce this type of filmography even if they don't deal with the same themes as the American industry. But by adopting their language and modes, they strengthen the role of film as a spectacle in which the spectator is passively relegated to digest the show in awe. They reproduce sealed and standardised forms that are "born and die on the screen". In terms that share the concerns of Adorno or Löwenthal on the *culture industries*, Chanan asserts on First Cinema:

> "[It] is not only designed to satisfy the commercial interests of the production companies: it also leads to the absorption of forms which necessarily imply a bourgeois *Wiltanschauung* inherited from the nineteenth century, in which the capacity of the subject to participate in making history is denied to all except the heroic and exceptional individual, and history is present only as an external force and an object of contemplation".[387]

Solanas and Getino saw Second Cinema as a reaction to First Cinema and identified it as the art or *auteur* cinema, which confronted the standardised forms of commercial film and introduced a freer understanding of the role of the filmmaker. But *auteur* cinema also empowered the bourgeois idea of the artist as genius: an individual whose talent isolated him from the masses. Second Cinema also developed its own structures to compete with First Cinema, but in the process it became, in Chanan's words, "a cinema made by and for the limited social groups characteristics of ... the dilettante elite"[388]. For Solanas and Getino, these groups "were politically reformist ... but incapable of achieving any profound change".[389]

385] Chanan, Michael 1997.
386] Stam, Robert, in Burton, Julianne (ed.) 1990, pp. 251-252.
387] Chanan, Michael 1997.
388] Ibid.
389] Ibid.

To face this situation, they understood that they could only make films outside of the needs of the system, which then could not be absorbed by it, or films undoubtedly made "to fight the system". Favouring the second option, they discussed militant cinema or *guerrilla filmmaking* as part of Third Cinema. In it, collective work confronts the notions of both First and Second Cinema. As Chanan asserts, in addition to the content of the films, the roles within the crew had to be transformed, as its members had to adapt themselves to possible threats and know all technicalities of the increasingly lighter and cheaper 16 mm equipment.[390] This would also serve, in their words, to "demystify filmmking" and the "magic aura" of genius behind the filmmaker,[391] in harmony with Benjamin's reflections on arts and modernity.

Chanan notes that the first definitions of Third Cinema led to certain ambiguities, mainly regarding Second and Third Cinema,[392] which made Solanas and Getino revisit the notion years later, due to the increasing usage of the term and the different sensibilities within the Latin America film scene and other Third World regions.[393] Getino then explained how only through the filmmaking practice of the group were the proposed theories legitimated.[394] But this also made him reflect on how unaware they were of the involuntarily influence of the specific Argentine situation on the content and form of their manifesto. Getino concluded that their theory was the consequence of a specific practice that needed to be evaluated accordingly: the national conditions generated both practice and theory, avoiding any intention of universality. The specific social space appeared then as *mediator* of this proposal.[395] And in terms that might recall both Gramsci and Fanon, Solanas expressed in 1978 that "Third Cinema is also aligned with the national culture ... By national culture we mean that of the ensemble of the popular classes".[396]

As Chanan discusses, Solanas then redefined the three categories –First Cinema as large-scale productions, Second Cinema as independent and *auteur* films, and Third Cinema as collective and militant films. He linked them to the political and ideological interests that the films represented: transnational capital, where film is a spectacle, *auteur*, where film is seen as information, and militant, where films are expressions of historical processes of social change.[397] Solanas avoided any other film aspect such as its theme, genre or style. Third Cinema was then defined by its

390] Ibid.
391] Solanas, Fernando and Getino, Octavio, in Velleggia, Susana 2009, p. 276.
392] Chanan, Michael 1997.
393] Professor Jonathan Buchsbaum has studied the various versions the text went through in its reprintings in Spanish, something that escaped most English speaking critics relying on the English translation of the original text for the magazine Tricontinental. He concludes that "[i]f the definition of Third Cinema was so changeable that Getino appears to argue against the existence of a single canonical text, ... then one must proceed with caution in terms of viewing any of the texts as definitive. Discussion of the continuing relevance of Third Cinema to the militant image should engage the ample and multiple discourses deployed by Solanas and Getino when articulating their ideas". Buchsbaum, Jonathan 2011, 'One, Two... Third Cinemas', *Third Text*, 25, 1, p. 28.
394] Ibid.
395] See Getino, Octavio 1979, *A Diez Años de "Hacia un Tercer Cine"*, Ciudad de México: Textos Breves 2 and Filmoteca UNAM.
396] Chanan, Michael 1997.
397] Ibid.

political approach and focus on national emancipation and popular values. As we will explore, even if narrow and problematic in many aspects, this conception developed an open-ended dialectical notion of reality and history, intimately linked to the changes of its practices and politics, as well as a more fruitful and complex relationship of Third Cinema with First and Second Cinema.

Regarding the relevance of the emergence of Third Cinema and *The Hour of the Furnaces*, it is necessary to briefly underline its connection to Walsh. On one hand, it is significant to notice the parallelism between the vocabulary used about working tools as weapons within the shared historical contexts of Solanas, Getino and Walsh, as the latter expressed regarding writing:

> "Until you realise that you have a weapon: the typewriter. Depending on how you use it, it is a fan or a gun, and you can use it to produce tangible results, and I don't mean spectacular results, ... but with the typewriter and a paper you can move people an incalculable degree".[398]

But it is also worth noting that he wrote extensively on the film, both publically and privately. For the weekly paper of CGTA that he directed from 1968 to 1969, Walsh, who collaborated to organise some of the clandestine screenings of the film, praised the work as "the best Argentinean film ever made" and focused on its problems of distribution –a huge obstacle for what he saw as a key work for the struggle of the Argentine working class. As we have mentioned before, in his personal papers, Walsh traced a link between the film and his testimonial work. It is notably significant that he wrote about it in the middle of a personal dilemma that became seminal to the transformation of his life: when he was being paid to write a novel –what he called his "bourgeois project"– but instead he spent his time working for free for the revolutionary weekly paper. Walsh stated that the experience of watching *The Hour of the Furnaces* led him to reflect on the need to work in a more "documentary way" in his own literary work, as he had done in *Operation Massacre* a decade before. This also meant getting involved more actively in the revolutionary political projects in Argentina. Profoundly affected by his activities within CGTA and the publishing of its paper, he ended up abandoning the "bourgeois project" of the novel and publishing his testimonial work *Who Killed Rosendo?*, which compiled all his investigative work on the killing of the union bureaucratic leader Rosendo García and two revolutionary militants.

398] 'Hoy es Imposible en la Argentina Hacer Literatura Desvinculada de la Política. Reportaje de Ricardo Piglia a Rodolfo Walsh. Marzo 1970', in Baschetti, Roberto (ed.) 1994, *Rodolfo Walsh, Vivo*, Buenos Aires: Ediciones de la Flor, pp. 73-74. (Translated by the author.)

ESTABLISHING THE THIRD WORLD CINEMA COMMITTEE

The impact of the notion of Third Cinema inspired the appearance of other film movements in Latin America, but also around the world, very particularly in Africa and Asia. Mestman notes that during 1973 and 1974, the idea of Third World "achieved a significant international visibility, articulating national confrontation with imperialism and class struggle within each country".[399] In this context, in December of 1973 in Algiers and May of 1974 in Buenos Aires, the General Assembly of Third World filmmakers was organised to accompany the creation of the Third World Cinema Committee, bringing filmmakers from the three continents together for "the construction of this cinematic thirldworldism".[400] The encounters were arranged to consolidate the organisation, debate the role of cinema in the national emancipatory and anti-imperial fights and examine the possibilities of cooperation in the field between the participating countries. Forty-five filmmakers attended the first meeting in Algiers, mainly from Africa and Latin America, with Lamine Merbah from Algeria presiding over the committee and members as significant as Santiago Álvarez from Cuba or Ousmane Sembène from Senegal, as well as observers from Europe. It was not for nothing, as Mestman asserts, that "Cuba, Algeria and Senegal were the three driving forces" of the transformations of the new cinemas in their respective regions.

As a result of this first effort, Mestman explains that the General Assembly recommended, among other things, national control of film production, distribution and commercialisation,

> "the use of cinema to raise the general cultural level through new films accessible to popular masses; ... support for revolutionary Third World filmmakers from national cinema structures; the abandonment of capitalist countries' cinematic conceptions and the search for new forms based on the authenticity and reality of Third World means; ... the promotion of co-productions between Third World countries, excluding imperialist countries".[401]

We can argue that the link between these aspects and Solanas and Getino's concern about how, considering the capacity of the capitalist system to assimilate any expression of rebellion and transform it into a means of consumption, a film's "testimony about a national reality is also an inestimable means of dialogue and knowledge on a global scale" and that "no internationalist form of struggle can be carried out successfully without a mutual exchange of experiences between peoples".[402] The Third World Cinema Committee then would be based in Algiers, capturing the Third Worldist counterhegemonic spirit dominating the context.

Jorge Giannoni, who had been the Argentine delegate in Algiers, established a Cinemateque within the Manuel Ugarte Third World Institute, part of the Univer-

399] Mestman, Mariano 2002, 'From Algiers to Buenos Aires. The Third World Cinema Committee (1973-1974)', *New Cinemas: Journal of Contemporary Film*, 1, 1, p. 40.
400] Ibid.
401] Ibid., p. 43.
402] Quoted in Chanan, Michael 1997.

sity of Buenos Aires (UBA). Under Héctor Cámpora's presidency, the first Peronist president after eighteen years of the party's being banned, UBA was in the hands of the Peronist left wing.[403] Even if Giannoni sympathised with the Guevarist-Marxist left, his role in the Cinemateque and promoting the second meeting of the Committee in Buenos Aires proved, as Mestman notes, "the coexistence of socialism and nationalism in the thirdworldist perspective".[404] The second encounter of the Committee was considerably smaller, with representatives from all full Committee members, but the only observers came from Latin America, Palestine and Libya.[405] As Mestman notes, four political issues dominated the meeting:

> "the processes of decolonisation and recovery of national heritage in each region; national productions and co-participation agreements; the distribution of regional cinema; and teaching in training institutes".[406]

Issues related to cultural hegemony and cinema as a cognitive tool, the decolonising process of audiences and their transformation into active protagonists, as well as the question of the national development of cinema, were central to the debates.[407] But, despite the almost uniquely political profile of the encounter and its discussions, Mestman asserts that some voices brought up important aesthetical reflections related to the inquiries of popular legibility. In this regard, Cuban representative Manuel Pérez, director of *The Man from Maisinicú* (*El Hombre de Maisinicú,* 1973), generated a certain controversy when he expressed:

> "We apply techniques and resources used by mainstream cinema, but we exert violence against the viewer's habits with a revolutionary subject matter, wholly different from the message in a capitalist producer's film".[408]

In June of 1974, a few weeks after the Buenos Aires encounter, another meeting was held in Montreal under the name *International Encounters for a New Cinema* (*Rencontres Internationales pour un Nouveau Cinéma*), organised by Montréal-based Comité d'Action Cinématographique and with over 250 participants from twenty-five countries from five continents, becoming perhaps the biggest effort of all to link as many as possible progressive and militant cinema collectives from around the world.[409] Relevant filmmakers and critics from the Third World (Solanas, Julio

403] It is worth noticing that the conflicts between the left and right wings of the Peronist movement were already notorious by then, and thus each side struggled for a hegemonic position within the institutions while waiting for the return of Perón.
404] Mestman, Mariano 2002, p. 45.
405] Mestman underscores the significant absence of Brazilian and Chilean representatives, due to the ongoing repression in these countries, as well as the tension with the Grupo Liberación during this encounter, with the absence of Solanas and the low key played by Octavio Getino, which helps to illustrate the conflictive political situation in Argentina at the time.
406] Mestman, Mariano 2002, p. 48.
407] Ibid.
408] Quoted in ibid. 49.
409] For an in-depth study of the encounter see 'Estados Generales del Tercer Cine: Los Documentos de Montreal. 1974', *REHIME Cuadernos de la Red de Historia de los Medios*, 3, Summer 2013-2014, Buenos Aires: Prometeo Libros.

García Espinosa, Miguel Littín, Med Hondo, etc.), but also the more politically committed and challenging from the First World who emerged from the rupture of 1968, discussed the potential of an emancipatory and national cinema to "democratise the film structures" and study the "general state of Third Cinema". [410] It is worth noticing how authors such as Espinosa reclaimed a "popular cinema"[411] that, with its core communicative value, would contribute to a "cultural revolution", and not so much to an "aesthetical revolution". He named the war film genre, in particular, as one with the possibility to reframe the standards of traditional dramaturgy and combine both fiction and *testimonio*.[412] As Mestman underlines, Solanas endorsed this position by using the notion of "decolonisation of taste", already introduced in *Towards a Third Cinema*, to suggest that film genres should not be rejected but transformed.[413]

Although changes in the world from the 70's onwards prevented any further meetings of the Third World Cinema Committee, this last encounter remains as a trace of the importance of the Third Worldist mentality at the time. Third World Cinema then intended to seek dialogue with the most progressive core of the film field internationally, as it perceived that the potential for its consolidation in the geopolitics of international cinema could also be found outside its regional boundaries.

Thus, we could argue that all of these encounters aimed at uniting the counterhegemonic film initiatives of the subaltern movements. In order to contextualise what made them possible, we should underscore the hegemonic position that the Third Worldist ideals –as social and political emancipatory movements– took within the cultural field. This was inspired by Fanon's reflections on the coloniser-colonised dialectics and the influence of other thinkers of the subaltern, among many other elements. And as the modernisation of the market and media facilitated the visibility of the Latin American writer-intellectual, alternative film circuits made these counterhegemonic films accessible in the West. Thus, it was not desirable to simply reject the cultural contributions of the hegemonic Worlds, but, rather, it was considered beneficial to establish a dialectical relationship with them. As Mestman notes, this approach also helped Third Cinema to affect the development, concerns and aims of other cinemas.[414]

Little by little, changes to the geopolitical conditions led to the disappearance of the Third World Cinema Committee. But the notions of Third Cinema and Third World Cinema would remain revisited, as in the case of professor Teshome Gabriel, one of the key contributors to the topic in the 80's and 90's. Even if some reconsidered the concept, surprisingly excluding it from its Third Worldist origin, many of

410] Mestman, Mariano 2013-2014, 'Editorial', *REHIME Cuadernos de la Red de Historia de los Medios*, 3, p. 9.
411] Ibid., p. 66. Espinosa also dealt with this same issue in 1971 in a short essay titled *In Search of the Lost Cinema* (*En Busca del Cine Perdido*), in which he stated that, to confront the Hollywood standards and contribute to a cultural revolution, "[o]ur option in facing a commercial or mass cinema is not an intellectual or minority cinema. Our option is the search of a popular cinema". Espinosa, Julio García 1995, *La Doble Moral del Cine*, Bogotá: Editorial Voluntad, pp. 33-34. (Translated by the author.)
412] Mestman, Mariano 2013-2014, 'Estados Generales del Tercer Cine: Los Documentos de Montreal. 1974', *REHIME Cuadernos de la Red de Historia de los Medios*, 3, p. 70.
413] Ibid.
414] Mestman, Mariano 2002, p. 52.

these new contributions helped to expand the notion and open it up to new film movements and critics. This was particularly relevant in the UK, where subaltern studies gained visibility thanks to the work of institutions such as the Birmingham School of Cultural Studies, among others.

REFORMULATION AND EXPANSION OF THE THIRD CINEMA NOTION: PRACTICE PRODUCING THEORY

Instead of fading with the shifting of times, Third Cinema was rethought and expanded by different film theorists, some also involved in film practice. As Chanan notes, Teshome Gabriel, an Ethiopian scholar working at UCLA, was perhaps one of the first authors responsible for the evolution of the concept due to the publishing of his book *Third Cinema in the Third World* in 1982,[415] tracing a more thorough bond between the original proposal, the emergence of Third World culture as proposed by Fanon's *three stages* and the new socio-political conditions that emerged in the 80's.[416] Thus, Gabriel brought the shifting quality of Third Cinema onto the scene. He reflected on how the 60's and 70's paradigms that served to define these film practices had to be reconsidered and transformed as follows:

> "[W]hile these roots remain important, Third Cinema can no longer be defined solely in terms of its radical beginnings, its ancestry. ... Third Cinema was always a cinema of change; to define it simply in terms of its original ideas is to reduce it to the status of a static historical phenomenon: something past or dead. Third Cinema, however, continues to live on, and like all living things, it cannot stay the same".[417]

Later, after the collapse of the Soviet bloc, Gabriel would write that the disappearance of the Second World affected the original notion of Third Cinema, once "we have been left with an idea of the "Third World" that no longer stands in contrast with a First and Second Worlds".[418] This would affect the implicit conflict that Third Cinema underlined between entertainment and art, though nevertheless the politically and culturally inclusive illusion of globalisation also created opponents "who might threaten the security of the New World Order".[419] And thus, Gabriel noted that "these dangerous "others" are almost invariably linked to the Third World",

415] Gabriel, Teshome 1982, *Third Cinema in the Third World: The Aesthetics of Liberation*, Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press.
416] Chanan, Michael 1997.
417] Gabriel, Teshome, 'Third Cinema Updated', available in: http://teshomegabriel.net/third-cinema-updated. On his site, Gabriel specifies that "The initial selections in this section are drawn from my book *Third Cinema in the Third World* and are intended to introduce students and others to the study of "third cinema." Many of the films and filmmakers that have been described as being part of the "third cinema" were from the so-called "third world." Yet, "third cinema" does not simply mean the films of the "third world.""
418] Ibid.
419] Ibid.

seeing resistance to "the pervasive structure of global capitalism"[420] as still necessary. For him a binary oppositional politics in the global social order appeared as an adoption of the structures of global capitalism itself:

> "Global capitalism requires an other, an enemy, in order to constitute itself as universal and homogeneous. To accept this oppositional mode of thought is to become a part of the same kind of binary structure. To the extent that Third Cinema continues to espouse the rhetoric and thinking of its early days, it is fighting with a phantom that gains strength from every opposition. Hence, Third Cinema becomes not an alternative to Hollywood or capitalism, but merely its mirror, its other".[421]

Gabriel suggested that this anti-dialectical reductionism did little to help with the aims of Third Cinema, which he considered "the guardian of popular memory".[422] Thus, he concluded by reformulating the political and cultural values of it dialectically, attuned with the complexity of the hegemony-subaltern relationship and using terms that we can think about in connection with Gramsci's fragmented and contradictory characterisation of popular culture as folklore:

> "[D]espite their rhetoric, neither Third Cinema nor the revolutionary movements from which it sprang were monolithically oppositional. Their positionality was never entirely fixed. Their resistance was always a mixture of different positions, different affinities, different approaches. ... One of the great mistakes of "left" politics has always been to imagine itself as pure and unambiguous in its oppositional stance. Rather than setting itself simply in opposition to capitalism, a composite politics, by its nature, works to disorganize the rigid "Us versus Them" structure upon which globalization, imperialism, and other forms of oppression are based. Third Cinema, at its best, always drew its strength from this sense of complexity, diversity, and multiplicity".[423]

As Chanan notes, Gabriel's contribution helped to reflect critically on how, considering the wide variety of film practices, an overestimation of these theoretical categories without understanding its dialectical dimensions could lead to mechanical and

420] Ibid.
421] Ibid.
422] Gabriel, Teshome, 'Third Cinema as Guardian of Popular Memory: Towards a Third Aesthetics', available in: http://teshomegabriel.net/third-cinema-as-guardian-of-popular-memory Gabriel's tribute to Gramsci, Fanon and Benjamin can be traced when he discusses the question of popular memory: "The 'wretched of the earth', who still inhabit the ghettos and the barrios, the shanty towns and the medinas, the factories and working districts are both the subjects and the critics of Third Cinema. They have always '[smelled] history in the wind'. Third Cinema, as guardian of popular memory, is an account and record of their visual poetics, their contemporary folklore and mythology, and above all their testimony of existence and struggle. Third Cinema, therefore, serves not only to rescue memories, but rather, and more significantly, to give history a push and popular memory a future".
423] Gabriel, Teshome, 'Third Cinema Updated'.

fruitless rigidity. The *grey areas* between the three categories originally suggested by Solanas and Getino are thus key for the development of Third Cinema itself. These are especially relevant to addressing the unequal relationship between the First and Third Worlds, both economically and symbolically.[424]

Gabriel's work revisiting the notion of Third Cinema had a great impact on an environment where subaltern studies were greatly expanding. This was the case with the Birmingham School of Cultural Studies, a pioneer on the topic in the Anglo-Saxon academic world since its foundation in 1964, with figures as significant as the founder Richard Hoggart, Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall and with a special focus on the contributions of authors from the Frankfurt School, as well as Gramsci, Fanon and Foucault. Cultural and media theorist Stuart Hall explored the importance of Gramsci's work in the racial issue for transforming "some of the existing theories and paradigms in the analysis of racism and related social phenomena".[425] And in this regard, he also studied the phenomenon of a new Caribbean cinema that joined "the company of the other 'Third Cinemas'" placing "the black subject in the centre"[426] to "make us see and experience *ourselves* as 'Other.'"[427]

Perhaps one of the most significant and controversial indirect effects of Gabriel's contributions was the organisation of the Third Cinema Conference for the 40th anniversary of the Edinburgh International Film Festival. This took place during a time of increasing interest in subaltern studies within the conflictive environment between the Thatcher administration and the British working class. One of the organisers of the event, British professor Paul Willemen, wrote a text to develop his reflections on the matter after the conference, a text that became a classic, entitled *The Third Cinema Question*. In his article, Willemen reproduced part of the booklet programme, which emphasised the critical historicist component of Third Cinema due to the relevance it gave to "the issue of cultural specificity ... and the question of how precisely social existence overdetermines cultural practices".[428] The booklet continued underscoring the importance of Third Cinema as follows:

> "Cultural activists outside the white Euro American sphere, while taking note of '70s theory and its genuine achievements, have continued their own work throughout this period formulating both in practice and theory ... a sophisticated approach to questions of dominance/subordination, centre/periphery and, above all, resistance/hegemony. This work is of fundamental importance today, ... because of its ability to unblock the dead ends of '70s cultural theories, ... and primarily because it opens out onto new practices

424] Chanan, Michael 1997.
425] Hall, Stuart 1986, 'Gramsci's Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity', *Journal for Communication Inquiry*, 10, 5, p. 24.
426] Hall, Stuart, 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora', in Rutherford, Jonathan (ed.) 1990, *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, London: Lawrence and Wishart, p. 222.
427] Ibid., p. 225.
428] Willemen, Paul 1987, p. 5.

> of cinema: a cinema no longer captivated by the mirrors of dominance/independence or commerce/art, but grounded in an understanding of the dialectical relationship between social existence and cultural practice".[429]

Regarding the "dead ends of '70s cultural theories", Willemen was even more enthusiastic about Third Cinema. He saw it as "far more relevant to contemporary cultural issues than any form of post-structural or any other kind of "post" theory",[430] while he also understood it as "a rejection of parochialism as well as a critical engagement with the positive aspects of '70s theory".[431] Among the references that were central to the conference, he named

> "'70s theories of subjectivity and Marxism in addition to the work of Fanon, C. L. R. James, black American writers and activists, Latin American and African film-makers, West Indian, Pakistani and Indian cultural traditions and intellectuals, etc".[432]

Willemen also addressed the choice of the notion of Third Cinema over that of Third World Cinema for both rethinking the relationship between culture and politics and exploring a film tradition outside the standardised industrial structures and English cultural theories. He exemplified this through directors like Nelson Pereira dos Santos, Ousmane Sembène and Ritwik Ghatak, whose works he saw as both

> "politically as well as cinematically illuminating, ... critical of, yet firmly anchored in, their respective social-historical situations", but "oppos(ing) a simplistic notion of national identity or of cultural authenticity".[433]

In his text he underlined that the artisanal Third Cinema could serve for framing the question of the national and its fragmentary formation,[434] as well as questioning the role of the intellectual and the critical aims of cinema that the original manifestoes illustrated.[435] Another element that Willemen highlighted was the widespread avoidance of defining an aesthetic agenda in these works, which recalled Brecht's and Benjamin's approach to the issue of artistic form. And in this regard, he eloquently pointed to the differences between European counter-cinema and Third Cinema: the first opposing mainstream cinema by "conjur[ing] up a prescriptive aesthetics", while the latter taking a dialectical approach that, even if also hostile to mainstream cinema, "refuse[s] to let the industrially and ideologically dominant

429] Ibid., pp. 5-6.
430] Ibid., p. 7.
431] Ibid.
432] Ibid., pp. 7-8.
433] Ibid., p. 8.
434] Regarding the formation of national culture, as applied to the three types of cinema, Willemen also mirrored Fanon's *three stages* structure, while also referring to the contributions of Edward Said on the matter, among others. See ibid., pp. 24-30.
435] Ibid., pp. 9-11.

cinemas dictate the terms in which they are to be opposed".[436] This aspect was essential to underscoring the expanding notion of Third Cinema beyond its Latin American origins and Third Worldism, as its contribution rested on "the relations between signification and the social".[437] Willemen then embraced Solanas' words from 1979 updating the notion to call it "the expression of a new culture and of social changes ... [that] gives an account of reality and history", which made it "an open category, unfinished, incomplete, ... democratic, national, popular cinema", and also "experimental", but not in the genius' lonely search for inventive formulas, but instead in "conduct[ing] research into communication".[438] As an experimental realm for research, Willemen saw in the openness of the proposal a concept permeable to social changes, as these very changes are what ultimately shape culture too. He exemplified this by proving that while ethnicity and gender were not central topics in the original manifestoes, they later became key concerns of Third Cinema.[439]

Willemen's contribution to the debate of Third Cinema was completed soon after when he co-edited the book *Questions of Third Cinema* along with Jim Pines in 1989.[440] The book was published as a compilation of papers from the Edinburgh conference and included authors such as Gabriel or Scott Cooper, among others.[441] The event proved to be a significant milestone for the study of Third Cinema and, along with the contributions of authors like Stam and Chanan, boosted a field of study that is still revisited today, as confirmed by the recent works of critics like Anthony R. Guneratne and Wimal Dissanayake[442] and Mike Wayne, just to name a few.

But besides the political and cultural aims and enrichment provided by the conference, the encounter became quite controversial for various reasons. Chanan names the fact that no Latin American filmmaker was invited to the event, which also distressed some of the guests, like critic Julianne Burton. He also underscores the confusion about the term Third Cinema, as apparently some of the participants referred to it as if it had been coined by Gabriel, or the case that, in his words,

> "Homi Bhabha delivered an extraordinary piece of metatheorising, addressing the distinction between cultural diversity and cultural difference from a perspective derived from Derrida, which betrayed complete ignorance of the history of third cinema in both practice and theory".[443]

Chanan also underlines that, due to the emphasis on theory, some of the aims of the conference were misleading, because praxis remained the central issue of Third

436] Ibid., p. 12.
437] Ibid., p. 14.
438] Ibid., pp. 14-15.
439] Ibid., p. 17.
440] Willemen, Paul and Pines, Jim 1989, *Questions of Third Cinema*, London: British Film Institute.
441] Gabriel contributed with 'Towards a Critical Theory of Third World Films' and 'Third Cinema as Guardian of Popular Memory: Towards a Third Aesthetics', while Cooper did with 'The Study of Third Cinema in the United States: A Reaffirmation.'
442] Guneratne, Anthony R. and Dissanayake, Wimal (eds.) 2003, *Rethinking Third Cinema*, New York and London: Routledge.
443] Chanan, Michael 1997. Bhabha contributed with the paper 'The Commitment to Theory.'

Cinema as a revolutionary cultural practice. And thus he notes that, in reflecting upon these tensions, Clyde Taylor, an African American participant, concluded that the conference was

> "a belated and confused attempt by Eurocentric theorists to come to terms with a cultural force which they had always found somewhat awkward and slippery".[444]

By the end of the 90's, the disappearance of the Soviet bloc demanded the rethinking of the general political context, consequently also calling for a shift in the urgencies and uses of film as a medium. Similar to the role played by the light 16 mm equipment during the emergence of Third Cinema, the explosion of video formats and the recent transformation of the digital era, with its economical and practical accessibility, have massively modified and atomised the means of communication, shifting the possibilities and needs of today's Third Cinema and *guerrilla filmmaking*. All these changes, as well as the historical context and conflicts that distinguish our era from the time when Third Cinema first appeared, suggests that, as Getino noted, it is precisely practice within a specific historical context that defines theory and not the other way around. Or quoting Marx, "man must prove the truth ... of his thinking in practice".[445]

MIKE WAYNE: A DIALECTICAL AND HISTORICAL MATERIALIST APPROACH TO THIRD CINEMA

Perhaps one of the most significant recent explorations on the current validity of Third Cinema comes from British media scholar and film theorist Mike Wayne, who traces a bridge between its original aspects and its remaining values to theoretically develop Third Cinema as a critical practice. For that purpose, Wayne studies in depth the dialectical relationship of Third Cinema with First and Second Cinema. He then elaborates a theoretical framework for approaching Third Cinema as a revolutionary praxis for today's filmmaking. The materialist dialectical method he uses is directly inherited from Marx's historical thinking. And thus, Wayne understands that historical materialist thinking demands specificity in its analysis,

> "to locate the actions and beliefs of individuals in their wider socioeconomic context and to understand change as something that is brought about not by individuals realising a 'timeless' principle but by individuals and collectives operating within conflictual and contradictory relationships that

444] Ibid.
445] Marx, Karl 1888, 'Theses on Feuerbach', available in: https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/theses/theses.htm

> shape what can be thought and what can be done at any particular point in time and space".[446]

Within this framework, Wayne proposes Third Cinema as "a political cinema about much more than politics in the narrow sense ... a cinema of social and cultural emancipation".[447] And thus he emphasises that the modest contribution it can make should grow to full scale: in the way they are produced, exhibited and distributed, as part of an integral counterhegemonic proposal. For Wayne, Third Cinema's hybrid understanding of form reflects critically on the tension between, on one hand, the alienating potential of dramatic action and character identification of the dominant cinema, and, on the other hand, the avant-garde elitist *auteur* cinema that, in its innovative formal exploration, abandons the communicative value and capacity of cultural practices to forge knowledge.

Wayne underlines the importance of Benjamin's advocacy for memory, as opposed to blind trust in progress because this calls for leaving the past behind, which he illustrated metaphorically through Paul Klee's *Angelus Novus*. Forgetting past injustices to favour the image of free men in new generations, placing progress over the sacrifice and dominance suffered in the past hides the complexity of socio-economic relationships and profit accumulation of capital, condemning the subaltern to its immobile subordination. Progress appears then as inevitable and thus capital as perpetual.[448] But as Benjamin reminded us, the past never leaves –history appears then as a continuum present, a *nunc stans*, in which pain always returns through memory. As the past is an essential part of the *intersubjective* formation of our collective identity, Wayne exposes that the call for public amnesia in the name of progress is also a way of shaping our very identity, to reconcile us with the dominating past and present socio-economical structures. For Wayne, this explains "the importance of being able to represent history as an open-ended site of conflict and change"[449] in Third Cinema, and its need to "explore the political urgency of memory".[450]

In this regard, Landy, who as we have seen underscores the importance of memory in Gramsci's work in relation to historical cinema, studies this issue in depth in the work of Senegalese director Ousmane Sembène, one of the most prominent Third Cinema figures.[451] For Landy, a series of Gramscian notions appear in Sembène's work, which we can apply to the core of Third Cinema as a practice:

> "the existing and possible relations between intellectuals and subaltern life, the presence of history and memory, the debilitating and enabling aspects

446] Wayne, Mike 2001, p. 64.
447] Ibid., p. 1.
448] Ibid., p. 110.
449] Ibid., p. 3.
450] Ibid., p. 4.
451] See Landy, Marcia, 'Gramsci, Sembène's and the Politics of Culture', in Wayne, Mike (ed.) 2005, *Understanding Film. Marxist Perspectives*, London and Ann Arbor: Pluto Press, pp. 58-86, where Landy analyses Sembène's *Camp de Thiaroye* (1988). Wayne also analyses Sembène's *Xala* (1975) in Wayne, Mike 2001, pp. 37-40.

Camp de Thiaroye, Ousmane Sèmbene, 1988.

> of common sense as folklore for an understanding of the politics of culture, the nation and the pedagogy of sameness and difference, as retarding and enhancing culture".[452]

For Wayne, Third Cinema's roots in colonised and dominated regions might explain its dialectical understanding of memory. As studied by Landy, in Grasmci collective memory appears as a more flexible stance than official history, an institution that both Third Cinema and *testimonio* confront through alternative narratives and forms of representation. In terms that might remind us of Walsh's reflection on the *property of history*, Wayne asserts that in this practice, the destroyed and fragmented colonised culture needs "to be recovered/excavated, although also transformed, for the needs of the present", as it is in the past that the inequities and struggles have been stored and "have yet to be redeemed".[453] Culture being essential in constructing collective identities, popular memory becomes crucial in shaping popular culture. And thus, its forms of representation, such as oral communication and testimony, are powerful tools for confronting the rigidity of written history that has traditionally marginalised the Other –inhibiting it from constructing its own history, while kidnapping its future. For Third Cinema, the flexible nature of public memory feeds "the struggles that have still to be fought, rather than affirming a present in which all struggles have been won".[454] History appears then as a succession of conflictive presents, an open-ended process of constant dialectical struggle that demands specificity of culture while addressing the tension between the popular and the modern. Thus, Third Cinema is often characterised by open-ended stories in which individuals are indissolubly linked with their crude surrounding reality. For Wayne, this distinguishes this cinema from other film forms, as it suggests that "[i]t is the people and not a few outstanding individuals who make history".[455]

452] Landy, Marcia, in Wayne, Mike (ed.) 2005, p. 58.
453] Wayne, Mike 2001, p. 30.
454] Ibid., p. 75.
455] Ibid.

The ethical aspects the subject of history –paraphrasing Benjamin, the subject that "seizes hold of memory at a moment of danger"– necessarily calls for an active position from Third Cinema, consistent with its political commitment to social and cultural emancipation. As in the case of Walsh's work and *testimonio* in general, the transforming aims and commitment of this practice rejects any attempt of objectivity or equidistance. Wayne reminds us that Third Cinema calls for a critical position, a partisan cinema because an impartial cinema is impossible "in a world full of 'partialities'",[456] where the complexity of interests at play make it inconceivable and undesirable to remain a neutral accomplice of dominant powers. In this regard, Wayne explores Third Cinema's unresolved "tension between militancy and entertainment, between engaging with popular culture and ... mass audiences",[457] as the viewer's awakening to the complexity of the conflictive reality requires a certain massive impact to inspire a subsequent commitment and social change. For him, there is no simple answer to this tension, as it is just part of Third Cinema's understanding of reality as a "process of becoming".

Therefore, as First, Second and Third Cinemas respond to institutional structures, methods and practices that affect their aesthetics and approach to culture and politics, Wayne pays special attention to the dialectical relationships between the three cinemas, in order to understand how they affect and transform each other to create different meanings on similar subjects. This explains why Third Cinema does not reject First or Second Cinema, but instead it relates dialectically to them, extracting "what is positive, life-affirming and critical" from them and transforming it into "a more expanded, socially connected articulation".[458] This tension is essential for Third Cinema: its interest in history as an endless process does not aim at reinventing the form "from scratch", but its interest in communication makes it open to formal explorations.[459] Third Cinema appears then flexible to all forms of representation and types of genres, often combining them in its main search for meaning, embracing both the popular and the new. We can argue that it finds in the popular and its *common sense* the grounds to build the new alternative *good sense*.

Wayne shows that in their dialectical relationship, for Third Cinema the audience plays a special role not fully developed in First and Second Cinema, as it aims at a spectator capable of both feeling and thinking who believes in the potentiality of change. Or, paraphrasing Zinn, for people who act *as if* they were freer than they had been told. In addition to enjoying the aesthetical experience, a spectator active for knowledge and social transformation is a key part of Third Cinema, as this practice refuses to accept the *status quo* as the final stage. Developing alternative narratives, even if their success is not fully guaranteed, is a commitment to imagination as well as to knowledge and communication in its dialogue with society. This helps to understand the weight given to the audience's intellectual potential in Third

456] Ibid., p. 13.
457] Ibid., p. 33.
458] Ibid., p. 10.
459] Ibid.

Cinema, as well as its focus on the production of meaning, both communicatively and cognitively.

Considering that most audiences today are mainly influenced by the current hegemonic First Cinema, and in relation to the dialogue between Adorno and Benjamin on *culture industries* and modernity, Third Cinema also appears as a warning about the alienating potential that modern forms of the *culture industries* represent for the masses, brutalising and manipulating them. But as Wayne notices, Third Cinema also recognises the wide potential of these industries in forming "collective identities, ... mak[ing] connections swiftly between spatially different phenomena, a critical, sceptical attitude, a thirst for information, a willingness to innovate, and so on".[460] Thus, while dominant cinema tends to overemphasise the value of emotion, atrophying the intellectual capacities of the audience, Third Cinema attempts to balance the tension between emotion and intellect, in order to free the audience's desire for understanding. Wayne underlines that Third Cinema does not reject emotions, because passion is needed for any commitment to social change. Instead, it tries to make the audience capable of consciously recognising the conflictive nature of their reality and to act upon both, the newly discovered knowledge and the aroused emotion. We could argue that this aspect mirrors Brecht's epic theatre interest in de-familiarisation, avoiding the blind value of empathy key to Aristotelian catharsis.[461]

To conclude, in his analysis, Wayne identifies four main aspects that define Third Cinema as a revolutionary praxis of social and cultural liberation:

- Historicity, because it "seeks to develop the means for grasping history as process, change, contradiction and conflict: in short the dialectics of history".[462]
- Politicisation, because it explores "the process whereby people who have been oppressed and exploited become conscious of that condition and determine to do something about it".[463]
- Critical commitment, because it "seek[s] to bring cognitive and intellectual powers of the spectator into play".[464]
- Cultural specificity, because Third Cinema "explores how culture is a site of political struggle" and understands that "the first things which colonialism and imperialism attempt to control, in parallel with economic resources, is culture, where values and beliefs and identities are forged and re-forged".[465]

460] Ibid., p. 41.
461] Ibid., pp. 42-43.
462] Ibid., p. 14.
463] Ibid., p. 16.
464] Ibid., p. 18.
465] Ibid., p. 22.

TOMÁS GUTIÉRREZ ALEA'S REFLECTIONS ON FILM PRACTICE AND AESTHETICS

In addition to the aforementioned contributions to the critical study of Third Cinema, perhaps one of the most thorough interventions in the theoretical field comes from the reflections of one of its practitioners on his own work: Tomás Gutiérrez Alea's *The Viewer's Dialectic*,[466] originally published in 1982. Alea was a well-known Cuban filmmaker and founder of ICAIC, just three months after the triumph of the revolution, and directed works as relevant as *Memories of Underdevelopment* (*Memorias del Subdesarrollo*, 1968), *The Last Supper* (*La Última Cena*, 1976) or *Strawberry and Chocolate* (*Fresa y Chocolate*, 1993, co-directed with Juan Carlos Tabío). Wayne also discusses Alea's text as a major reference for studying all aspects of the revolutionary practice of Third Cinema. We could argue that his book is one of the few theoretical works of a filmmaker that aimed at covering the political, social, cultural and also aesthetical inquiries of an alternative cinema in its full range. Thus, analysing the key aspects of this work might also inspire alternative forms of film representation and narratives that today must address the confrontation of new threats and challenges.

In connection with the central inquiries of his time, Alea first contributed to the question of the intellectual within the revolutionary process by differentiating between what he labelled as "popular" cinema and popular cinema –a concern which, as we have seen, had been present in the Latin American film debates of the 60's and 70's. The first was seen as the cinema that reached the masses but did not awaken any critical perspective in them –the spectacle by which the *culture industries* expanded the illusion of reality. On the other hand, the latter appeared as the cinema that aimed at reaching the masses for transforming their reality –"a cinema that expresses the most profound and authentic interests of the people".[467] Thus, Alea underlined the difficulty of coping with the realm of the popular and the masses within the context of the revolution. We could situate this distinction within Gramsci's concern about the conformist forms of popular culture that mystify the subaltern, lacking the critical features that could serve its struggle and then inhibiting its transformative potential, thereby actually favouring and reinforcing hegemony. Moreover, we could argue that Alea's reflections on this problem recall the shared interest of the artists during his time in exploring the shift from *common sense* to *good sense*, in order to find the *appropriate forms* that would best serve the revolutionary goals. And for this, the role of the *organic intellectual* seemed essential. Regarding the functional levels of cinema as art in society to be of critical importance for this transformative enterprise, Alea expressed his view as follows:

466] Gutiérrez Alea, Tomás 2009, *Dialéctica del Espectador*, La Habana: Ediciones EICTV. (All quotations from this publication are the author's translation unless stated otherwise. A translation to English of the text is available in: http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinessays/JC29folder/ViewersDialec1.html and subsequents.)

467] Ibid., pp. 31-32.

> "[A]rt has as a function to contribute to a better enjoyment of life –[on an] aesthetical level– ... ; to contribute to a deeper understanding of the world –[on a] cognitional level– ... ; and finally to contribute also to reaffirm the values of the new society and, therefore, to fight for its conservation and development –[on an] ideological level".[468]

Alea then explored "the suitable ways for cinema" to achieve these objectives. Using a dialectical methodology that mirrored the Adorno-Benjamin debate and with a particular interest on the dramaturgical contributions of Brecht, he focused on addressing the notions of spectacle and spectator. Spectacle can offer different emphases depending on how each of the three levels –aesthetical, cognitional and ideological– are combined. Thus, Alea saw it as a "bearer of ideology",[469] as it often underscores the values of entertainment that reinforce the established order, abusing the use of emotive resources to engage with the audience. For Alea, a spectacle appeared as an interruption in the flow of reality, which is something it shares with revolutions, as they also signify ruptures with reality and time. As in Walsh's reflections on his literary work and *The Hour of the Furnaces*, the Cuban filmmaker noted that during revolutions documenting becomes more urgent. For Alea, the interruption of the spectacle complicated the perception of complex social relationships and interests underneath, once society returned to the routine. He then suggested that in order to make cinema useful for social change, it must be understood as a "factor for the spectator's development",[470] liberating the spectator from being *just a spectator*. Thus, emotion is not enough: cinema must enlighten through reason too, because both emotion and intellect need to coexist to achieve these goals.

Alea understood that the filmmaker was capable of uniting fragments of reality, providing these socially significant signs with a new meaning within the realms of fiction, liberating them from their established common usage. The combination of them could produce surprising associations that in ordinary life might appear blurry. Thus, reality as a spectacle on the screen might offer new meanings to the spectator, as it is in selecting and ordering that meanings are forged and new narratives are built. We could argue that this view of the filmmaker's aptitudes shares ties with Gramsci's on the intellectual activity within the fragmented and contradictory nature of *common sense* and its potential to move towards *good sense*, emancipating dominant *conceptions of the world* and creating alternative ones. As in the literary debates discussed earlier and Gramsci's and Benjamin's concerns regarding cultural representations of the subaltern, Alea expressed his views on cinema and realism as follows:

> "Film realism does not lie in its supposed capacity to capture the reality "as it is". It lies in its capacity to reveal, through associations and relations,

468] Ibid., pp. 32-33.
469] Ibid., p. 37.
470] Ibid., p. 40.

Memories of Underdevelopment, Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, 1968.

> the diverse aspects isolated from reality –that is, through the creation of a "new reality"".[471]

Therefore, the Cuban filmmaker did not reject spectacle *per se*, but instead he understood, critically and dialectically, its potential to insert the extraordinary ruptures from reality into the realms of the routine. As an act that negates reality, spectacle often just falls into the category of metaphysics becoming an escapist act; but it can also fall into the field of dialectics and then aim at transforming reality. Depending on its usage of the three levels, spectacle can either inhibit or enlighten the spectator. Regarding the potential of spectacle for affecting the commitment of the spectator in practical life, Alea suggested:

> "[A] *spectacle which is socially productive* will be that which negates daily reality ... and at the same time feels the premises of its own negation; ... It can't just offer itself as a simple way out or consolation for a burdened spectator. Rather it must aid the viewers' return from the other reality ... stimulated and armed for practical action. This means spectacle must constitute a factor in the development, through enjoyment, of the spectators' consciousness. In doing that, it moves them to stop being simple, passive (contemplative) spectators in the face of reality".[472]

471] Ibid., pp. 43-44.
472] Ibid., pp. 47-48. (Translation taken from: http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinessays/JC29folder/Viewers-Dialec1b.html.)

Alea also explored in his text the spectator's active and passive attitudes, because observing is an act for acknowledging reality and as such it can activate the reaction of the spectator towards it. Some spectacles can encourage the critical capacities of the spectator and others cannot, promoting one kind of spectatorship over another is part of the filmmaker's responsibility. Alea understood that popular cultural forms like films cannot simply add a political content to their stories, but also must question their position within their context and transform their function fully. An alternative critical cinema must then speak about the complexity of reality unambiguously, providing the spectator with a stimulating spectacle that helps in understanding the world, a spectacle that is at the same time partisan in its commitment. The latter does not mean a message of *truth* from the intelligentsia, but instead an organic guide to act.[473]

Alea inserted all these matters in the open-ended process of history, because "[r]eality demands taking part ..., and that demand is at the base of man's relationship with the world ... throughout all of history".[474] For him, the sealed dramatic forms of dominant cinema make the spectator feel that his journey, and thus the journey of history, has been completed after the film has ended. He proposed cinema as a stage in the notion of history as a process of change and history as a site for action. For this reason comfort and conformism must be challenged. But how? As finding a balance between the tension between reason and emotion did not mean rejecting the latter, Alea observed that, while dominant cinema tends to explain the complexity of the world through the emotions of individuals, an alternative counterhegemonic cinema should also work with emotions as a stimulating source for social commitment and critical thinking. Identification with the Other, in which spectators freeze their existence and live within the subaltern for a while, appeared as a powerful medium for solidarity and change.

In this regard, Alea confronted Brecht's de-familiarisation to Aristotle's identification and catharsis in drama dialectically, to reflect on Eisenstein's and Brecht's practical contributions on alienation and de-alienation. Thus, he suggested a series of strategies for addressing these tensions in connection with the levels of cinema as art and its enlightening potential –from entertainment, pleasure and stimulation, critical thinking, rational understanding and awakening, and finally political commitment. Emotional identification in its absolute degree can lead to uncritical empathy with heroes or myths, provoking an anesthetised and reactionary distinction between the *good guys* and the *bad guys*.[475] But on the other hand, complicating identification or shifting the standardised subjects of it can also disrupt uncritical blind sentimentalism. For Alea, the use of emotional identification was as relevant as the rational acknowledgment of de-familiarisation, because both could forge the conditions of a desirable change. His dialectical view on the link between emotion

473] Ibid., pp. 54-56.
474] Ibid., p. 54.
475] Ibid., p. 58.

and reason led him to formulate a unifying notion of cinema as a revolutionary praxis to conclude that, as Wayne asserts, "[t]he function of aesthetics is to be an enriching manifestation of the cognitive recognition of man's own reality, giving the keys to its own transformation".[476]

THIRD CINEMA AND *GENERIC TRANSFORMATIONS*

The studies on the phenomenon of Third Cinema, and especially Alea's and Wayne's emphasis on its dialectical character towards First and Second Cinema, are particularly useful for rooting this study to a counterhegemonic tradition of thought and practice. When authors like Rosenstone or White propose experimental cinema as the right form to face and reject the dominant Hollywood official historical discourse and other types of *realist* film forms,[477] without taking into consideration other possible critiques of their political strategies, they are also embracing a type of cinema with problems of access for popular audiences similar to those of the written texts that they call to surpass. But more importantly, as Willemen analysed regarding British counter-cinema, these insights involve a negating and rejecting position, far from the possibilities that dialectics among the various forms of cinemas can offer. Contrary to this, instead of eluding the positive contributions of First and Second Cinema to legibility, communicability or form, Third Cinema faces hegemony through a dialectical position, where the subaltern can alter *commonsensical* knowledge and transform it into narratives that might subvert the established –from *common sense* to *good sense*.

As in the case of *testimonio*, Third Cinema aims at intervening in deep social changes to overturn power while keeping its critical attributes. It offers alternatives to the closed-ended official narratives that propose no option but the dominating *status quo*, where the present tense seems like an irremediable final stage of history. This might explain why many of these authors also see in it a more relevant practice to study the subaltern than any *post theory*, in harmony with Jameson's criticism of postmodernism as the"cultural logic of late capitalism" in its relativism of knowledge.[478] In this regard, Wayne asserts that postmodern theories, in favouring relativism and subjectivity, are no less idealist than traditional humanism, which embraces a trust in experts, institutions and methods that supposedly leads to universalism, neutrality and objectivity. For him both explain reality through ideas, beliefs or discourses instead of material interests and conflicts, questioning as a result the pos-

476] Wayne, Mike 2001, p. 153.

477] See Rosenstone, Robert, 'The Historical Film: Looking at the Past in a Postliterate Age', in Landy, Marcia (ed.) 2001, *The Historical Film. History and Memory in Media*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, p. 58, and White, Hayden 1988, 'Historiography and Historiophoty', *The American Historical Review*, 93, 5, p. 1199.

478] Jameson, Fredric 1991, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Durham: Duke University Press. On this topic, see also Harvey, David 1992, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, Cambridge and Oxford: Blackwell; Callinicos, Alex 1989, *Against Postmodernism. A Marxist Critique*, Cambridge and Oxford: Polity Press; Anderson, Perry 1998, *The Origins of Postmodernity*, London: Verso, or Williams, Raymond 2007, *Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists*, London and New York: Verso.

sibility of partisanship in the search for knowledge. Thus, the postmodern emphasis on particularities instead of specific historical and socio-economic contexts weakens the possibility of standing for any *truth-claim* based on arguments and evidence, as all *truth* appears simply as a constructed representation of reality. But as Wayne underlines, while considering *how* meanings are constructed is a key part of the process of critical thinking, magnifying its relevance over the search for meaning inhibits our capacity to choose one explanation over another, and then committing to a political side becomes capricious and unreliable.[479] By restricting our capacity to act, we can also frustrate the potential of cultural practices to become actors in society, capable of committing to and participating in social change. To confront this approach to history, culture and politics, Third Cinema focuses on producing meanings through practice that demand an active and partisan engagement from audiences, instead of playing with discursive constructions for scholastic games.

Moreover, by interrogating the role of intellectuals and the origins of their interests, Third Cinema also questions the artist's elitist position in capitalist society, as it mirrors its foundational bourgeois ideology. The very notion of genius emerges then to prevent people from being active in cultural production and shaping the representations of their collective identity and *intersubjectivity*, accepting passively instead what hegemony shapes from above. The dialectical relationship of Third Cinema with other cinemas necessarily requires that special attention be paid to this aspect of reality in order to transgress the established and find *forms appropriate* to the struggles of the subaltern. As Landy underscores regarding the role of the intellectual in the case of Sembène, this must "produce a cinematic text that complicates questions of knowledge and of action toward the ends of political transformation" considering

> "the contradictory character of subaltern existence, the nature of history and storytelling as the means of bringing past and present into politically productive crisis, the possibility of cinema as a pedagogical instrument, and the role of common sense as both debilitating and enabling in the process of constructing collective notions of 'the people.'"[480]

But we must ask: how can the experience of Third Cinema practice inspire the current counterhegemonic forms of narrative representation? As we have seen, Third Cinema appeared linked to very specific conditions, dominated originally by both the national conflictive political panorama and the strong idea of pan-Latin Americanism and Third Worldism that boosted committed solidarity. This, and the lack of solid national cultural institutions to channel the urgency of a desired social change –as the poor local First and Second Cinema proved–, led to the creation of

479] In this regard, Wayne asserts that "we need to move beyond simple ontological assertions (the nature of all discourses is that they are constructed) and ask epistemological questions (what does this construct add to our knowledge of the world? What truth value does it have?)" Wayne, Mike 2001, p. 127.

480] Landy, Marcia, in Wayne, Mike (ed.) 2005, p. 58.

a *guerrilla filmmaking* methodology, emphasising documentary over fiction. As for today, even if the notion evolved throughout the years, to explore the possible contribution of Third Cinema to the contemporary situation of cultural politics, as well as to new narratives of subaltern struggle, it is key to approach the limitations of cultural imperialism inherited from Fanon's contributions, as it was a dominant concept for explaining the inequality between the West and the Third World during the 60's and 70's.

Wayne observes that the original underlining of the national question in Third Cinema excluded the idea of nation from any critique and thorough analysis of other divisions such as class, gender or region. Thus, this "over-homogenised view of the national culture" frustrated "a more complex model of transnational cultural exchanges and influences".[481] Avoiding the potential of modern cultural forms to vanish the established *aura* of the arts, for Wayne the original contributions of Solanas and Getino tended to patronise "the consumer of western cultural products", failing "to take into account the possibility of indigenising media products in ways which make them relevant to immediate, local circumstances".[482] This stance simplified the oppressor-oppressed binary relationship, seeing only imbalances between one sector (the West) and the other (the Third World) without considering other forms of political, social and cultural asymmetries or more elaborated consensus-coercive relations between hegemony and the subaltern. The major threat of this position for the practice of counterhegemonic representations is that it can inhibit a proper dialectical methodology, especially in times or places where West-East/North-South inequalities have been blurred. Nevertheless, and besides its sometimes simplistic approach, Wayne finds the notions of cultural imperialism preferable to those from un-dialectical and idealist post-colonial authors like Bhabha.[483]

Wayne understands that Solanas and Getino's primal three cinemas model offered little dialogue and interaction between them, due to the specific conditions of their environment. And thus, as this seems like limiting the development of Third Cinema as a revolutionary theory and practice today, to surpass the constraints of the original text, Wayne calls for *generic transformations*.[484] In this regard, he notices that Solanas and Getino's failures are in contradiction with the very relationship between *The Hour of the Furnaces* and Second Cinema, as it was the institutionalisation of this type of cinema in Argentina that opened up the possibilities for the film's formal experimentation, as well as that of most of the other important authors of the New Latin American Cinema, from Glauber Rocha to Alea. But while that period was mainly dominated by a dialectical relationship between Second and Third Cinema, Wayne believes that today's context demands Third Cinema to engage dialectically with First Cinema. In a society considerably more conformist

481] Wayne, Mike 2001, p. 113.
482] Ibid.
483] Ibid., p. 114.
484] Ibid., pp. 136-145. A proposal that, as we have seen, Solanas and Espinosa also presented at the *International Encounters for a New Cinema* in Montreal in 1974, but perhaps not fully developed.

where new media atomises the production of works and reception of audiences, it seems intelligent to dialogue with the cinema and forms of representation where hegemony resides, even more than ever before.

Opposing the liberal thought that portrays history as a closed process, the material conflicts that define history call for a cultural response. The needs of the subaltern struggles, whether class, genre, race or other, are no less pertinent today than yesterday, no matter how diversified they get within the current capitalist social order. We could argue that Wayne's claims for *generic transformation* provide a critical proposal for this study, in addition to Chanan's dialectical reflections on the *grey areas*, Gabriel's transformative view of the Third Cinema notion and Espinosa's and Manuel Pérez's aesthetic insights on the usage of techniques and resources from mainstream cinema. Dominant cinema is a cultural space where the contradictions of hegemony can be challenged. Considering that both cinema and revolutions share an interest in the masses, Wayne understands that if the revolutionary enterprise is part of Third Cinema's praxis, then such an engagement with First Cinema is a must. Avoiding such dialectical duty and negating the positive and progressive potential of First Cinema might condemn current counterhegemonic film forms to be seen as dogmatic and belonging to a vanished past. Nevertheless, joining this dialogue does not mean making political compromises.

As we have discussed, genres are powerful codes that massively impact both cognitive and communicational purposes. Solanas and Getino saw First Cinema as the inheritor of 19th century art, where the audience passively consumes a sealed work serving hegemony's needs. An alternative cinema that aims at inserting its proposals of social change into the population demands the formation of an active conscious spectator. Therefore, any practice aiming at revolutionary goals must act *as if* these established forms can be subverted, but also taking advantage of their recognisable features, using them to achieve successful engagements with popular sectors unfamiliar with cultural manifestations outside of mainstream standards. As both First and Second Cinema avoid specificity and tend to embrace universality, idealism or abstraction –for Wayne, First in optimistic ways, and Second in marginal and pessimistic ones–, and because cultural forms are intimately linked to socio-economic models, a new counterhegemonic cinema that aims at modifying this must attend to dominant cinema's lessons and contradictions in order to develop its potential fully within its cultural reality.

As time-saving forms of communications and forgers of knowledge, genres are also expressions of specific *conceptions of the world*. Conformist and formulaic approaches to genres, like those often used in mainstream cinema, legitimate the hegemonic *conceptions*. But rejecting them unilaterally does not serve the aim of engaging with the popular sectors, but on the contrary it cuts the bonds with them, missing the massive communicative and cognitive potential of genres to affect audiences. As we have seen, dominant drama favours a portrait of history where changes are led by the will of exceptional individuals, instead of showing the complexity of interests and social relationships –something essential to understanding historical events in their full range within an endless process of struggle that demands tak-

ing part. This reduction of history to the actions of an individual is one of the main criticisms that the biopic receives as a genre, particularly in its Hollywood format. But as Wayne notes, First Cinema also offers fine examples of dialectical relationships with Third Cinema. For instance, the 60's and 70's Westerns that mirrored the Vietnam War introduced critical themes to audiences that were not used to them, proving that historical circumstances create contradictions within the system that cannot always be avoided.[485] This exemplifies why *generic transformations* are an option for such goals.

Wayne illustrates his proposal only through the musical genre and the particular case of Alan Parker's *Evita* (1996), which we could also see as a hybrid form of biopic as well. He restricts discussions of this transformative proposal exclusively to those genres that offer spaces through which it is possible to sneak in the main characteristics of Third Cinema. Thus, he sees in the musical a choral potential, with its use of masses and capacity to provide space for reflection for the audience, but seems sceptical about the possibilities of transforming other dominating genres of cinema, including the biopic, often focused on individual achievements.[486] But a dialectical position cannot avoid the challenges that any genre represents for transforming its standards, very particularly when historical films and biopics are so relevant in forming the knowledge of audiences in society. We could argue that, as extensions of particular *conceptions of the world*, genres are also *commonsensical* representations of it, assumed and established hegemonically. Challenging and problematising their boundaries mean taking a stand in favour of a shift towards *good sense*. Therefore, it seems necessary to assume the proposal of *generic transformation* on the widest possible scale, as an attempt to subvert the bastions of dominant narratives. Through this proposal, we can offer historicist, politicised, critically committed and culturally specific alternative forms for the forging of a historical knowledge that can compete dialectically with hegemonic understandings of the world and engage with the needs of the subaltern struggles. And these inquiries, even if very pertinent, are not new.

485] Ibid., p. 138.
486] Ibid., p. 90.

CHAPTER 5

SPIKE LEE'S *MALCOLM X*. THE BIOPIC AS A NARRATIVE OF THE SUBALTERN

This chapter deals with the content of Spike Lee's *Malcolm X* (1992) as an example of a challenging proposal in the field of the biopic genre for developing alternative narratives to the hegemonic ones, without rejecting the dialogue with them in its aim to achieve a massive impact in the forging of audiences' historical knowledge. The focus of this part is on an analysis of the film's content and some of its significant scenes attempts to underscore the relevance of Lee's movie in creating meaning. This analysis is not framed by its dramaturgical structure, but instead by the different sections that encapsulate the substance of the film, according to the literary

source on which it is faithfully based –*The Autobiography of Malcolm X* by Malcolm X and Alex Haley. It is worth noticing that this source is actually a testimonial work resulting from the interviews that Haley kept with Malcolm X. For professor Michael Eric Dyson, an author very attached to the black community and its popular themes and figures, it was an effort meant "to impose order on the fragments of his experience"[487] as is the case with most autobiographies. For professor Kristen Hoerl, both the book and Lee's film aimed "to provide a more nuanced and sympathetic understanding of the radical black leader and his critique of mainstream institutions in the United States".[488] Nevertheless, the importance of the literary source suggests to us that memory appears as a central element in the film, an aspect even more relevant because Lee carried out a series of methodical interviews to capture what he describes as "the essence of the man",[489] in order to bring his research closer to the vital experiences of Malcolm and the impact he made in those that met him.

It is necessary to reveal some of the main reasons why Lee's film is a relevant achievement to exemplify central concerns regarding the usage and transformation of the biopic genre as a narrative form and method of action for the subaltern. We have seen before the limiting and problematic aspects of the biopic in representing history, as well as its formulaic massive exploitation by the mainstream *culture industries*, as the genre was favoured within the Hollywood studio era. But regarding the actual possibilities of transforming genres, it is now time to bring back a question that has been raised before. Can we rethink and re-elaborate both the celebratory and reductive characteristics of the biopic and use the genre for the narratives of the subaltern? And if so, how can we handle an alternative to the dominant and complicated issue of mythologising in the biopic? As Bingham wonders, by appropriating the genre for the representation of historically marginalised figures, can we be assimilated into its own conventions? Or, on the contrary, is the assimilation part of the appropriating process, "a bending of the ... mainstream form to the purposes of the minority?"[490]

Lee's *Malcolm X* provides a rich view of the topic for various reasons. The first, and arguably more obvious of them, is that the film is dedicated to the representation of a marginalised figure, who we can also consider an *organic intellectual* according to Gramsci's notion, belonging to the realms of racial politics and subaltern history. It was Malcolm's radical qualities as well as his difficulties fitting into modes of *commonsensical* correctness that appealed to Lee over other black leaders like Martin Luther King.[491] Thus, even if some criticised certain polishing that occurred regarding some of Malcolm's most controversial statements, the radical

487] Dyson, Michael Eric 1995, *Making Malcolm. The Myth and Meaning of Malcolm X*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 135.
488] Hoerl, Kristen 2008, 'Cinematic Jujitsu: Resisting White Hegemony through the American Dream in Spike Lee's *Malcolm X*, *Communication Studies*, 59, 4, p. 357.
489] Lee, Spike and Wiley, Ralph 1993, *By any Means Necessary. The Trials and Tribulations of the Making of Malcolm X*..., London: Vintage Books, p. 33.
490] Bingham, Dennis 2010, *Whose Lives are They Anyway? The Biopic as Contemporary Film Genre*, New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, p. 169.
491] Lee, Spike and Wiley, Ralph 1993, p. 4.

and revolutionary message of Malcolm X is not avoided or compromised. On the contrary, the character's conflicts are exposed throughout the film. And as Hoerl highlights, Lee is successful in bringing "Malcolm's radical rhetoric within mainstream popular culture",[492] entering the subaltern's voice in a dialectical debate with hegemony. In this regard, the film undoubtedly takes a side, embracing Malcolm's significance and contributions.

Another aspect that makes it relevant for this research is that Lee's film is not a *minority film*, that is, an experimental or elitist *auteur* work made for a small or narrow target audience. Even its long and complex production process, which included the Warner Bros. studio plans modified later by Lee, suggests a work aiming at a wide massive audience, combining both studio structures and an author's vision. It is then an extraordinary case on many levels, but as the result proves, it is not a utopian or unachievable example. We can then argue that it is an intervention of a known filmmaker in a dominant genre to both take advantage of its massive potential and subvert its hegemonic characteristics. By doing this Lee, who believed the Malcolm's story "belonged to Black film"[493] even if this was still segregated and in "a kind of embryonic stage",[494] attempts to bring a radical figure and his message to a wider audience, affecting and problematising the public debate on race politics. And thus, his work also aims at rethinking and transforming the genre dialectically, in order to address the tension between exploring its massive possibilities and challenging its boundaries.

Hoerl links Gramsci's notion of *common sense* to Barthes' reflections on the myth, because both tend to perpetuate and naturalise the system of beliefs. Thus, she emphasises Lee's strategy for both questioning the myth of the American Dream while using its classical celebratory form to channel Malcolm's counterhegemonic message to a broader audience. By doing this, Lee both affects the public *commonsensical* understanding of reality within the racial struggles of the 90's and underscores the remaining contradictions between liberal ideology and the experience of marginalised groups.[495] For a director like Lee, who had dealt with radical topics on race politics in previous films[496] through an original stylistic amalgamation[497] that got articulated in *Malcolm X*, we can argue that this intervention in the narrative of public history reinforced his own figure as an intellectual, according to the categories studied by Gramsci.

492] Hoerl, Kristen 2008, p. 356.
493] Lee, Spike and Wiley, Ralph 1993, p. 11.
494] Ibid., p. 12.
495] Hoerl, Kristen 2008, p. 358.
496] Dyson notes that "[i]n School Daze, Lee ridiculed the petty but pernicious politics of skin color that abound within black culture, an echo of Malcolm's warnings against the ubiquitous threat of black self-hate. In Do the Right Thing, Lee dashed the easy sentimentalism that often prevails in integration-minded talk about racial progress and harmony, a favorite rhetorical trump in Malcolm's shuffling and dealing of the racial deck. And in Jungle Fever, Lee explored the fatal conflicts that can ensnare interracial romance, which in his view and in the view of the early Malcolm is a chasm of pathology". Dyson, Michael Eric 1995, p. 132.
497] Bingham states that Lee "has often juxtaposed the bold politico-aesthetic gestures of Eisenstein, Godard, and Brecht with the classical pictorialism and linear storytelling of Lean, Ford, and Kurosawa". Bingham, Dennis 2010, pp. 175-176.

We want to emphasise the significance of the film's content in producing meaning, affecting our historical knowledge and challenging the limitations of the biopic genre, so this chapter will not deal in depth with other debates surrounding the difficulties of the film production, even if they may also be relevant in many ways. Such is the case of the long journey the project went through since producer Marvin Worth acquired the rights of the autobiography in the late 60's or the many script drafts it had –that included the craft of James Baldwin, Arnold Perl or David Mamet, among others– before it got into Lee's hands. Other relevant aspects left aside are also Lee's criticism of Warner Bros. initial choice of Norman Jewison as director and his demand of a black director's point of view to handle such a character, which could be seen as a call for cultural specificity. And also, once Lee was appointed director, the pressure he suffered from parts of the black community led by poet Amiri Baraka, who saw Lee inadequate due to class issues.[498] These concerns, even if significant, surpass the boundaries of this study, which is focused on the final result of the film itself and its value and contribution to the transformation of the biopic genre.

Finally, it is necessary to underline that it is not the purpose of this study to label film productions like Lee's *Malcolm X* as Third Cinema or any other type, as even the right usage of the term outside the Latin American or Third Worldist cultural movements of the 60's and 70's is in dispute. Therefore, tracing bridges between the Latin American practices studied before and Lee's film is solely meant to explore the variety of possibilities in intervening and forging alternative meanings to mainstream hegemonic narratives. By doing this we can also examine their common grounds and aims, even if they result from different contexts that demand attention to their specificities.

THE OPENING: HISTORY AS *EVERLASTING NOW*

The three sections of the film mark a portrait of Malcolm's transitions: first from a hustler and criminal to a pupil of Elijah Muhammad, leader of the Nation of Islam, and then to an independent black leader that forms the Muslim Mosque and the Organization of Afro-American Unity after breaking with the Nation of Islam, when he developed a renewed approach to both religion and politics. We can argue that these three sections correspond to a continuous leap, using Gramsci's term, from *common sense* to *good sense* in Malcolm's story, from engaging with positions that become *commonsensical* at one point or another to applying a critical commitment that develops alternative *conceptions of the world* within an ongoing awakening and

498] Ironically, Baraka turned Lee's debate on Jewison's racial legitimation for representing Malcolm X, into a debate on class legitimation. For details on these conflicts from inside, see Lee, Spike and Wiley, Ralph 1993, pp. 1-16. On the other hand, Dyson asserts that "[t]he directors of comparable epic films ... confronted nothing like the scale of attack that Lee endured in the battle over Malcolm's legacy". Dyson, Michael Eric 1995, p. 133.

consciousness-raising. As Hoerl notes, these transformations also underscore the mythical structure of classical biopics, as it is through Malcolm's determination that we see him succeed as a black leader, something that "helped to establish the film's common sense appeal among audiences".[499] We can claim that what we have here is a character that does not fit the myth of the American Dream, but, nevertheless, Lee uses this myth as a rhetorical device to expose the flaws of its *commonsensical* essence.[500]

Perhaps we could even link the three section structure of its narrative to the *three stages* by which Fanon described the emancipatory cultural development of colonised people's mentality: assimilation of the hegemonic culture and its forms of life, needs and goals as *common sense*; disruption and reaction to it by reinterpreting memory; and the *fighter phase* that awakens people, resulting in a genuine and distinctive national culture for the colonised groups. In this case, this distinctive culture would be represented by the inclusive black nationalism of the last Malcolm X, as opposed to both the assimilation of white hegemonic values on one hand and their flat rejection and exclusivity of the Nation of Islam as a sect on the other.

From the beginning, the film establishes a view of history sympathetic to subjects central to the subaltern. Dominant liberal representations of history tend to observe the past as a closed stage where tragedies and traumas took place to guarantee our current harmony. They look at the past to explain the origins of our equilibrium to new generations, legitimating the *status quo* of the present by celebrating the enterprise of *great men* that fought for our benefit. Universal ideas of freedom and democracy are often encapsulated in the morals of these narratives. Steven Spielberg's *Amistad* (1987), *Schindler's List* (1993) or *Lincoln* (2012) can be sees as fine examples of this approach.

On the contrary, the opening titles of Lee's *Malcolm X* underlines Benjamin's view of history as *nunc stans* in the memory of the oppressed. An American flag covers the screen recalling Franklin J. Schaffner's *Patton*. Then a voiceover introduces Malcolm X's speech to his audience and dramatic music accompanies the powerful rhetoric of the preacher. The image cuts from the flag to the video footage of LAPD officers' brutal beating of Rodney King in 1991. After several cuts from the flag to the video footage, and the increasing dramatic feeling of music and Malcolm's incendiary speech, the flag starts to burn. The cut continues until Malcolm finishes with his words: "we don't see any American dream. We've experienced the American nightmare". Only an X remains from the flag.

As Malcolm explains during an interview within the film, the X referred to the mathematical sign of the unknown, in avoidance of black people to carry the names the whites assigned them during slavery. Thus we could argue that the remaining X of Malcolm in the flag underlines the remaining racial segregation and inequality underneath the US social order, burning out of anger as LA burned after Rod-

499] Hoerl, Kristen 2008, p. 361.
500] Ibid., p. 362.

ney King's case. As Bingham notes, Lee emphasises Malcolm X's legacy for today situating his figure in *two times*: "mythical transcendent time and urgent present time".[501] It is then a call for the emergency of revisiting Malcolm's memory for current conflicts and building an indivisible bridge between past and present through aesthetical decisions closer to music videos than to conventional biopics. As illustrated from the very beginning, for Lee, history appears as an open-ended stage of struggle and a continuous succession of conflictive presents.

FIRST SECTION: WHITE HEGEMONY AS *COMMON SENSE*

The aesthetics of the first section of the film are notable for their bright and colourful palette, as well as for an often inventive choreographed *mise-en-scène* with complex camera work, recalling the classical big studio films of the 40's and 50's to provide an illusory and unrealistic touch to the narrative. Attuned with that treatment of the image, this part follows Malcolm Little as the hustler Detroit Red and his friend Shorty in Boston during the Second World War years. They act as small criminals searching for ways to make money fast and barely worry about anything but their social appearance, aspiring to fit in with the expectations of the white world. Thus, in a scene at the hairdresser, Shorty straightens Malcolm's hair to make a conk –a popular hairstyle at the time among African American men. After a painful sacrifice with a chemical product, Malcolm looks at himself in the mirror and expresses his

501] Bingham, Dennis 2010, p. 181.

final satisfaction bragging in front of the others: "It look white, don't it?" The scene represents brightly the subaltern's assumption and normalisation of hegemony's *conception of the world*, as if it was in harmony with its needs and interests.

Anticipating the bond and clash with Elijah Muhammad in the second section of the film, the story then focuses on Malcolm's involvement with Harlem gangster West Indian Archie, who appears first as a father figure and then as an enemy. Back in Boston, Malcolm reunites with Shorty and both get involved in a relationship with white women. Together they plan the robbery of a wealthy white couple for which they all are arrested. During the trial, Malcolm notices the racial discrimination of the institutionalised legal system: while the white women get two years in a women's reformatory for burglary, Malcolm and Shorty get fourteen counts of eight to ten years in prison –because "our crime wasn't burglary; it was sleeping with white girls", Malcolm says. The question of interracial relationships appears as a shady topic in this part, probably due to the dramaturgical structural needs of the work, as it impacts the direction Malcolm will take after prison. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that it is treated in a manner closer to the views on the issue during the years of Malcolm in the Nation of Islam than to the statements he expressed afterwards.[502]

Additionally, the gangster aspirations appear then as another form of engagement with what Fanon called the *colonial mentality*, as it does not offer a challenging

502] By the end of his life Malcolm X was asked on interracial relationships, to which he replied: "How can anyone be against love? Whoever a person wants to love that's their business –that's like their religion". Ambar, Saladin 2014, *Malcolm X at Oxford Union: Racial Politics in a Global Era*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 29-30.

alternative to the established system, but instead a submission to it by assuming the hegemonic way of life that highlights social appearance. In searching for ways to achieve recognition and glamour –being "a victim of the American social order", Malcolm narrates–, racial discrimination gives no other choice but a criminal life.

As with the legal system, regarding the role of institutions as materialisations of the American Dream myth in perpetuating segregation, a flashback also shows Malcolm as a talented student in elementary school who faces discrimination when the teacher advises him to forget his dream of becoming a lawyer and focus on realistic professions for him, like carpenter. The educational system appears then as a basic tool for legitimating racial segregation, challenging the fake institutional grounds of the American Dream. Malcolm's transformation from a promising student into a hustler underscores the structural obstacles that subordinated racial groups face. As Hoerl asserts, Lee's insistence on the socio-economical circumstances "provides a resource for "critical contradictions between experience and ideology" crucial to the process of social transformation".[503]

Other flashbacks digging into Malcolm's childhood show him profoundly marked by the continuous aggressions of white supremacists and the killing of his father, a Baptist minister and supporter of black nationalist leader Marcus Garvey. The murder of his father causes the mother's mental breakdown. These scenes contain iconic references to Spielberg's *E.T.* (1982) and Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), the latter known for its sympathetic portrait of the KKK and dismissive view of black people. For Bingham, this exemplifies that Lee, who wanted to shoot his film like David Lean's *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962), appropriates "for black filmmakers and audiences the epic tradition established in American ... cinema".[504] This reinforced the wider strategy of the film, placing Lee "in the unusual position of performing an appropriation that might look like assimilation".[505]

It is important to notice that flashbacks are often used in historical films to underscore the role of memory in reconstructing fragmentary past experiences and shaping the character's relationship with history. As Landy notes

> "in biopics, [flashbacks] often serve to create an organic sense of unfolding events and especially a sense of inevitability. This sense of inevitability can thus assist common sense by evoking "memories" of the familiar and recognizable landmarks of national, familial, and individual "experience"".[506]

Maureen Turim also asserts that flashbacks, as plot devices that rearrange the order of storytelling, have a double function of referring to an individual experience –the historical forging of subjectivity– and of forming and informing about a collective

503] Hoerl, Kristen 2008, p. 363. Hoerl borrows the phrase "critical contradictions between experience and ideology" from professor Dana L. Cloud.
504] Bingham, Dennis 2010, p. 175.
505] Ibid., pp. 171-172.
506] Landy, Marcia 1997, *Cinematic Uses of the Past*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 20-21.

imagination of history in the spectator –an *intersubjective* recorded past.[507] For Turim, history appears in flashbacks as a subjective experience in which memory "return[s] from the repressed", underlining how these are related to personal trauma, and thus to witnessing and giving testimony in order to challenge official narratives of history.[508] All these aspects are present in the case of Malcolm's flashbacks, as they recall the traumatic memories that remain underneath and will inevitably acquire a new meaning once they are articulated by his consciousness-raising. Memories become then the ground to build a new man surnamed X.

Another aspect worth noticing in this part is the use of the voiceover, which takes a retrospective critical tone in first person. For that purpose, Lee chooses to freeze the frames in some moments when Malcolm is narrating about his past, something that stops abruptly the advance of the narrative. This seems as a resource to allow the audience's reflection, in connection with Brecht de-familiarising techniques.

SECOND SECTION: RECOGNITION OF RACIAL IDENTITY AND THE NATION OF ISLAM AS A NEW *COMMON SENSE*

The second section of the film takes a more realistic and sober tone, far from the pyrotechnics of the first part. These aesthetic choices accompany Malcolm's journey from his years in prison –where he converts to Islam thanks to his fellow inmate Baines– to his entry into the Nation of Islam, becoming a prominent minister of the organisation led by Elijah Muhammad. He rejects then his surname as a slave's reminiscence and adopts the X instead. The shift from the first segment to the second represents the first shift from *common sense* to *good sense*: from the subordination to the dominant *conception of the world* established by white hegemony to the realisation of his black identity and the direct reaction towards the acknowledged racial segregation.

Malcolm is defiant towards the prison institution from the beginning and that catches the attention of Baines, a member of the Nation of Islam who sees in him a seed of rebellion yet unstructured. Baines confronts Malcolm due about straightening his hair and dares him to free himself from his "mental prison", terms that recall Fanon's reflections on *colonial mentality*. This will appear again later, when outside prison a converted Malcolm meets Shorty and asks him to stop consuming drugs and liberate himself from the "slave mind", because prison is in the mind.

Malcolm's awakening to his black identity is dramatically condensed in a scene where Baines, after asking Malcolm who he is and emphasising pride in being black –"we are a nation", he states–, faces Malcolm and takes him to the prison's library to check the words "black" and "white" in a dictionary. Baines then shows

507] Turim, Maureen 1989, *Flashbacks in Film. Memory and History*, New York and London: Routledge, p. 2.
508] Turim, Maureen 2001, 'The Trauma of History: Flashbacks upon Flashbacks', *Screen*, 42, 2, p. 210.

how "black" is described as "destitute of light", "enveloped in darkness", "dismal or gloomy as the future looked *black*", "soiled with dirt", "foul", "sullen", "hostile", "foully or outrageously wicked", or "indicating disgrace". Then he looks at "white" and asks Malcolm to read it out loud, discovering descriptions such as "the colour of pure snow", "reflecting all the rays of the spectrum", "the opposite of *black*", and then "free from spot of blemish", "innocent", "pure", "without evil intent", "harmless", "honest", "square-dealing", or "honourable". By the end of the reading, Malcolm questions how both terms are described and wonders if the book was written "by white folks". Baines explains that the "truth is lying here", because "if you read behind the words, you have to take everything the white man says and use it against him". Then he challenges Malcolm to go word by word in the dictionary for that purpose, and finishes saying that "if you take one step towards Allah he will take two steps towards you".

We could argue that this scene encapsulates a series of reflections related to Gramsci's views on the *language question*, because language appears as the main symbolic mechanism for understanding reality through the dual process of both abstracting and specifying its meaning. Through Malcolm's awakening, the scene problematises the exclusivity of language as a bastion dominated by white supremacy to explain the world and the events that constitute its history. Critical to the realm of the intellectual, language appears then as a powerful tool in forming hegemonic *conceptions of the world*. By disputing it, Malcolm will face how those around him conceive of the world, realising his racial identity in confrontation to white dominance, as is shown in a scene where he questions the skin colour of Jesus Christ to the prison chaplain. He will then react to it by embracing a new *common sense* around alternative counterhegemonic values, of which the Nation of Islam

is its institutional expression. In the Nation, Malcolm's confrontation with white America's taken for granted *truth* gets articulated for the first time.

Outside prison, the section focuses on Malcolm's rise as a Muslim minister and black leader, rejecting the integrative efforts of the civil rights movement, such as those led by Martin Luther King. Malcolm embraces and advocates Elijah Muhammad's teachings, opening a series of mosques and marrying Betty X. One scene also pictures the value Malcolm gives to collective power to challenge white hegemony when, after a Nation's member is brutally beaten up by the police, Malcolm solemnly leads a group of the Nation's men, uniformed in suits and ties, to the police headquarters and hospital. Other people join them spontaneously to demand justice, and the unity of the people force police and hospital personnel to assume responsibility for the man's care. In contrast to his hustler years, collective organisation appears then as the finest transformative engine of the social order and the most efficient way to channel shared dissent for subaltern groups.

Nevertheless, Malcolm's success leads to rivalry and jealousy among some members of the Nation, including Baines, who shifts from mentor to enemy. When Malcolm learns about Elijah Muhammad's infidelities and the accumulation of wealth that he and other Nation's leaders are gathering, like Baines, he feels deceived. As Bingham notes, Muhammad's betrayal, which exposes "the tragedy of the protégé who outstrips his mentor",[509] is announced in a rally scene that recalls Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane* (1941), capturing the representation of Charles Foster Kane's self-destruction to portray Malcolm's misfortune. The complex relationship between

509] Bingham, Dennis 2010, p. 186.

Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm and the crowd of followers seems to refer also to Leni Riefenstahl's *The Triumph of the Will* (1935), a relevant film on leadership and masses' manipulation. For Bingham, this appears as

> "slyly appropriate given that these scenes precede and foreshadow the betrayal to come and intimate the lockstep devotion to which the Black Muslim legions are indoctrinated".[510]

Nevertheless, and within the context of American black and popular culture, these scenes seem to contain also a series of original aspects. Dyson for instance emphasises that "[n]ever before in American cinema has an alternative black spirituality been so intelligently presented",[511] as Malcolm's speeches are extensively present. Thus, Malcolm and the Nation's thoughts and rhetoric are introduced in a cultural medium that had always kept its doors closed to them. From this perspective, Dyson concludes:

> "This is no small achievement in our anti-intellectual environment, which punishes the constituency that has made Malcolm its hero: black teens and young adults".[512]

It is worth noticing that in this section, mass media starts to achieve a more relevant role, as a key device in mediating reality. In one scene, for instance, Malcolm looks angrily at the images of repression against African Americans in TV that include some of Martin Luther King, while one of his speeches criticising the efforts for integration by other black leaders is overheard. A second scene, portraying one of his appearances in the media, combines for the first time black and white grainy footage with colour.

As for the voiceover in this segment, mainly covering Malcolm's narration from the worship of Elijah Muhammad to the discovery of his betrayal and fall as mentor and role model, it is relevant to notice that it appears as a more poignant device than before. In contrast with the first part, the image never freezes, and thus the scenes let the emotional component flow better, reducing the reflexive characteristics used previously.

THIRD SECTION: INCLUSIVE BLACK NATIONALISM AS *GOOD SENSE*

By the end of the second section, due to Malcolm's polemic statement on Kennedy's assassination, first at a Nation's event –intercut with actual footage of the assassina-

510] Ibid., p. 186.
511] Dyson, Michael Eric 1995, p. 139.
512] Ibid.

tion and funeral– and then in front of the press, he is punished for disobeying Muhammad's commands on the matter. Here again, the failures of the institutionalised justice system, though this time that of the Nation, appear as a trigger of Malcolm's drama: we know he is not actually judged for his comments on Kennedy's killing, but mainly for his challenge of Muhammad's moral leadership and his criticism to the misconduct of Baines and others. The black and white of Malcolm's second statement on Kennedy, evoking actual media footage, mixing sound qualities and combining again fixed and hand held camera shots with notorious film grain, aims at underscoring the realistic effect.

The tension between Malcolm and the Nation becomes intolerable once Malcolm's bodyguard, Baines' son, confesses to him that he was asked to participate in a plot to kill him. Then the third section starts: in a press conference in 1964, Malcolm declares his departure from the Nation due to "internal differences". He expresses that "in the past I thought the thoughts and I spoke the words" of Elijah Muhammad and "that day is over": "from now on I speak my own words and I think my own thoughts", he says. And so he continues explaining that with "more independence of action, I attend to use a more flexible approach to working with others to get the solution to this problem". Regarding working with other "negro leaders", Malcolm emphasises that "we must work together, we must find a common solution to a common problem". He announces then the establishing of Muslim Mosque Inc., endorsing the "political philosophy of black nationalism" in order to "control the politics of our community", but open to ideas and "financial aids from all quarters". "Whites can help us but they can't join us", he underscores, as "there can be no black-white unity until there's first some black unity". Malcolm concludes by announcing his pilgrimage to Mecca, because as a Muslim he must do it at least once in his lifetime.

Once again, the scene mixes visual qualities to gain realism and media urgency, cutting from colour staged camera work to thick grain hand held images. This shift in the film aesthetics accompanies Malcolm's new critical leap from *common sense* to *good sense*. The film gets rawer from this point onwards and Lee starts to intersperse different types of footage, highlighting the realistic approach and media intervention in the storytelling. Malcolm's trip to Mecca for instance starts in Egypt juxtaposing a more naturalistic framing and lighting in the main camera with the cheap 8 mm colour footage from what seems to be a group of white CIA men spying on Malcolm, later mixed with grainy black and white. The images from Mecca –which were shot by a second unit without Lee because non-Muslims cannot enter the city– take an almost documentary approach to accompany the reading of the letter Malcolm sends to Betty. In it, Malcolm declares that "I have eaten from the same plate, drank from the same glass and prayed to the same God with fellow Muslims whose eyes were blue, whose hair was blond and whose skin was the whitest of white, and we were all brothers". The confession emphasises the rebirth of Malcolm's political and religious inclusive conceptions of race, as he states at the end of the letter: "I'm not a racist", he claims, embracing only "freedom, justice and equality".

In his return from Mecca, in another press conference with similar aesthetics as the previous one, Malcolm denounces the hypocrisy of those nations that complain about racism in South Africa at the UN while "at the same time say nothing about the practice of racism here in American society". Then he exposes his views on "mental" and "cultural" colonialism and the need for a mental and cultural migration back to Africa, though not necessarily physical, for reaffirming "our bond with our brothers over there will help to strengthen ... black people in America". When the discussion turns towards the issue of weapons, a black man shouts in the back, increasing the tension by announcing the threat posed to Malcolm by his former colleagues from the Nation.

The next scene, which opens with Malcolm checking from his window with a riffle in his hands, fading from black and white to colour, highlights even more Lee's aesthetical choice for this part, as it makes a straight reference to a series of pictures Malcolm X did for Life magazine. Thus, Lee underlines the importance that media takes in providing an image of reality, but he also calls for the urgency of rethinking the character through other possible narratives, as a film does intervening in *historytelling*. What follows is the attack of Malcolm's house by the Nation –in similar fashion to the one his family suffered during his childhood by white supremacists–, and then we find out about his statement in the media through black and white footage. We learn later about the threats and harassments Malcolm and his family endure from members of the Nation, while his phone is also being tapped by intelligence services.

Malcolm's murder scene recovers certain mystical aesthetics, stretching out time to make it last for over eleven minutes, which helps to build the dramatic tension and inevitability of the coming known events. It starts following the different characters separately, including Malcolm's assassins, on their way to his speech in

the Audubon Ballroom and the preparations for it. *A Change is Gonna Come* by Sam Cooke, released after Cooke's assassination in 1964 that became an anthem for the Civil Rights Movement, plays in the background. The song ends when a lady in the street asks Malcolm if he is right and claims she will pray for him –"Jesus will protect you", she says to Malcolm's surprise. After the fast cut of his killing during the speech, the scene shifts again to the urgency of black and white footage. A hospital spokesperson announces that "the person you know as Malcolm X is no more". Archive footage shows Martin Luther King's actual statement:

> "The assassination of Malcolm X was an unfortunate tragedy and reveals that there are still numerous people in our nation who have degenerated to the point of expressing dissent through murder and we haven't learned to disagree without becoming violently disagreeable".

THE ENDING: MALCOLM'S MEMORY AND THE TENSION BETWEEN MYTH AND URGENCY

The ending of the film is a significant and long montage that brings back the theme established in the opening titles through a merger of aesthetics. By exposing a view of history as an *everlasting now* in conflict, Lee links Malcolm's struggles to the present again, but this time recurring to the end of the apartheid regime in South Africa –which was ironically mentioned by Malcolm before, as we have seen. Over archive pictures and footage of the real Malcolm, we hear the eulogy that actor and activist Ossie Davis gave at his funeral, emphasising the African American quality of Malcolm. Other relevant figures appear, including images of Angela Davis, Tommie

Smith's and John Carlos' Black Power salute at the 1968 Olympic Games or members of the Black Panther Party. The montage then cuts once to a staged demonstration in Soweto. With its universal and mystical rhetoric, the eulogy continues over more footage of Malcolm, reinforcing his importance to the audience:

> "you know why we must honor him: Malcolm was our manhood, our living, black manhood! This was his meaning to his people. And, in honoring him, we honor the best in ourselves".

Malcolm then appears in a meeting with Martin Luther King and, with the footage of Malcolm's burial and the shots of Soweto again, the eulogy marks the power of remembering Malcolm's work for the future:

> "Consigning these mortal remains to earth, the common mother of all, secure in the knowledge that what we place in the ground is no more now a man, but a seed which, after the winter of our discontent, will come forth again to meet us".

The montage cuts to a New York street carrying his name, where people shout it too, and then finally to a classroom of African American kids in the US celebrating his birthday. The teacher concludes the final lesson: "Malcolm X is you, all of you, and you are Malcolm X". The children then stand to shout proudly "I am Malcolm X", but we notice the last children change their accent and the class is different: it is South Africa. Nelson Mandela, standing in the role of the teacher, quotes a Malcolm speech from 1975 to the children:

> "We declare our right on this earth to be a man, to be a human being, to be respected as a human being, to be given the rights of a human being in this society, on this earth, in this day, which we intend to bring into existence by any means necessary".

But Mandela's monologue is cut and the last four words are from the actual archive footage of Malcolm's speech. The film ends and goes to credits.

Lee bonds past and present by linking Malcolm and Mandela through their struggles to be "respected as a human being", underscoring that their fights never end. Placing this thesis in the context of a classroom for addressing younger generations offers an undeniable partisan perspective and pedagogical approach to the question of the film's intervention in *making history*, producing meaning and knowledge. As we have seen, this is an aspect that recalls Gramsci's views on the role of the intellectual, a concern it shares with Third Cinema's proponents.

Hoerl believes that the ending was Lee's attempt to link Malcolm's legacy to "an international and interracial peace movement",[513] which is something he tried to do in the last months of his life. The montage of known media images is also a tool for revisiting public memory, gaining *commonsensical* legitimacy in the audience for questioning the dominant social order. For Hoerl, who underlines the importance

of memory in Marcuse as the power to imagine, rethink and change social relations, the closing part of the film recalls Malcolm as "an important figure for empowering racial minorities in the present", legitimating his figure in the racial struggles of the US and placing him alongside other figures, better accepted by the mainstream, like Mandela.[514] And thus she concludes:

> "Rather than blunt the edge of Malcolm X's critique, however, the film's use of conventional narrative, documentary footage, and the figure of Nelson Mandela situate mainstream audiences and commercial media to consider Malcolm's radical political philosophy".[515]

Nevertheless, Dyson criticises the ending of the film for maintaining the "hagiographical tendencies of all epic films" that romanticise the character instead of focusing on his work.[516] He believes that the "unnecessary didacticism" of the last scenes appears "contrived and facile" to bring new black generations closer to Malcolm's legacy, proving also how hard is to succeed in that task.[517] Nevertheless, Dyson underscores that the bond between Malcolm's and Mandela's tragedies is moving, and that through Malcolm's speech in Mandela's voice, one can feel the need of communities for memory to forge their own narratives, with their own martyrs, heroes and myths. And thus he writes

> "[o]ne senses at that moment ... the loss of heroic authority that marks our era and that sends millions back to the words of a dead man for hope".[518]

On the other hand, Bingham responds to Dyson's criticism by observing that if Lee had excluded the reference to Mandela and South Africa, he

> "would [have] sacrifice[d] the director's attempt to balance historical complexity and authenticity with the film's rhetorical address to its audience in its own time".[519]

Thus, the ending brings up the *two times*, the real and the mythological, emphasising the difficult tension between accuracy and myth. As Bingham asserts, "Lee chooses to print the legend, leaving the "actual" Malcolm X always a work in progress, afloat in his own unrealized possibilities".[520] We could propose that, through the use of these *two times*, Lee attempts to solve the tension between universality and specificity, between myth and urgency, without excluding any of them.

513] Hoerl, Kristen 2008, pp. 360-361.
514] Ibid., p. 366.
515] Ibid.
516] Dyson, Michael Eric 1995, p. 140.
517] Ibid., p. 142.
518] Ibid., p. 143.
519] Bingham, Dennis 2010, p. 188.
520] Ibid., p. 183.

As a result, we could argue that Lee's *Malcolm X* is a fine example of a subaltern narrative that operates dialectically and positively with hegemonic forms of representation, transforming its genre and bringing counterhegemonic notions to wider audiences. For Bingham, Lee's approach towards the celebratory qualities of the biopic genre and his appropriation of them is then an exercise of "updating and expansion".[521] This brings the work closer to the notion of *historical allegory* in its usage of memory for rethinking and re-elaborating collective narratives and surpassing hermetic particularities, as we explored in the second chapter of this study. By using the conventions of the genre, Lee inserts a marginalised figure like Malcolm X inside the American bastion of history, "reignit[ing] debates that had become dormant".[522] For Bingham, who describes Lee as "the first African American director to harness the Hollywood vehicle of dreams in the auteurist era",[523] criticisms of the film often seem infantile, because demanding Lee and other black directors to reject working with studios would leave white hegemony to dominate the field without resistance. Then, history would continue to be forged and told by the dominant groups. These views would ironically embrace then the same aims of that very hegemony that historically dictates when an art form is restricted after minorities attempt to access it. On the contrary, Lee's dialectics of generic appropriation and transformation prove that one "can honor a tradition and criticize the institutions that produce it".[524]

For Hoerl, Lee's bright strategy was to make a "counter-hegemonic film wrapped up in the generic traditions of liberal ideology", using the myth of the American Dream and the patterns of the biopic genre as *commonsensical* understandings of social life to transport the narrative of the racial subaltern.[525] Thus, these mythical patterns as *common sense* helped the film to expand its message and enter into popular *belief systems*. This made audiences empathise with Malcolm and his struggles, while questioning the very myths produced by white hegemony and intervening in wider discussions in the formation of public knowledge. Thus, for Hoerl, Lee's effort represents an active stand in the processes of social change,

> "for it suggests that the social order may be challenged both within and against the discourses and forms of dominant ideology ... [and] that counterhegemonic messages may be inextricable from dominant ideology in popular texts insofar as common sense beliefs and structures open spaces for commercial media to recognize social injustices and re-envision a just and equitable future".[526]

Lee's recapturing of Malcolm X's story serves to rethink the tragedies of the past for inspiring the struggles of today. But as Gramsci taught, for surpassing the narrow

521] Ibid., p. 189.
522] Ibid., p. 190.
523] Ibid., p. 177.
524] Ibid., p. 175.
525] Hoerl, Kristen 2008, p. 366.
526] Ibid., p. 367.

particularities of the past and expanding alternative views, it is necessary for the subaltern to develop a dialectical approach between its counterhegemonic aspirations and the dominant inherited *common sense*. For this reason, Hoerl believes that popular mediums like cinema, with its massive potential, should take hegemonic conventions, assumed as *common sense* by the audience, and use them to challenge accommodated notions, transforming knowledge and dominant *conceptions of the world*.[527] For similar reasons, J. Emmett Winn considers that "Lee's film is able to both challenge Hollywood's racist ideological legacy and remain a viable commercial movie",[528] contributing to the debates on the capacity of media to improve the public's knowledge and social awareness, acknowledging the racist ideology remaining in current US institutions.[529]

According to Dyson, even if within the black community some expected a harder and more enraged Malcolm, Lee's portrait "survives the Hollywood machinery and remains a provocative, valuable figure".[530] And regarding the significance of the film in reconstructing Malcolm's legacy in public memory –"among black and other Americans"-, he concludes:

> "Above all, in taking the risk of defining and interpreting a figure entwined in racial and cultural controversy, he has sent us back into our own memories ... in search of the truth for ourselves. And he has done more than that. He has set the nation talking about a figure whose life deserves to be discussed, whose achievements deserve critical scrutiny, and whose career merits the widest possible exposure".[531]

In conclusion, Lee's *Malcolm X* appears then as a compelling film that challenges and stretches the limits of the *commonsensical* conventions of the biopic genre. It is a call for the *intersubjective* value of memory in the search for the *form appropriate* for intervening in public historical debates, as well as in the forging of knowledge, producing narratives and meanings from and for the subaltern. Lee's dialectical strategy embraces a commercial approach to dominant forms of representation, thus aiming at the massive potential of the medium and its genres, in order to both surpass the limitations upon and marginalisation of subaltern groups and bring Malcolm's counterhegemonic contributions into the public forum for continued discussion. By doing this, Lee commits to the formation and transformation of narratives, endorsing Gramsci's call for alternatives to hegemony that use *common sense* to facilitate the massive channelling of the marginalised and suggest a direction for the necessary shift towards a new *good sense*.

527] Ibid., p. 367.
528] Winn, J. Emmett 2001, 'Challenges & Compromises in Spike Lee's *Malcolm X*', *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 18, 4, p. 463.
529] Ibid., p. 464.
530] Dyson, Michael Eric 1995, p. 141.
531] Ibid., pp. 143-144.

CONCLUSION

As we get closer to *rolling the credits* of this work, it is now time to examine its main inquiries and the answers we have provided through the observation of the studied practices and their dialectical engagement with other opposing ones. Thus, we can ask whether alternative perceptions of history can employ dominant forms of representation for expressing the narratives of the subaltern, without necessarily becoming part of or legitimating hegemony. And because this research is mainly orientated towards the film field and its genres convey shared conventions, classifying narratives according to audience expectations on content, we should then answer whether hegemonic genres like the biopic, focused on individual accomplishments instead of social intricacies, can be valuable for more complex and critical narratives aiming at the interests and needs of subordinated groups for

inspiring social change. Can these forms then be usurped and transformed into new *forms appropriate* to new energies, becoming able to bring forward the *conceptions of the world* of the subaltern?

Both Latin American testimonial literature and Third Cinema explored these concerns with a dialectical approach, challenging the limitations of established forms like the novel or the schematically delineated realms of fiction and documentary respectively. By confronting the separations and hierarches determined by the *culture industries* and the capitalist market, and thus the inherent social and political interests they contained, they managed to elaborate alternative forms of representation and subvert the dominant genres, opening up their realms to traditionally marginalised voices and faces. Therefore, instead of rejecting the positive characteristics and potential provided by the hegemonic forms or aiming at inventing a whole new formula from scratch, they dialogued organically with the established practices and analysed their contradictions and contributions, in order to provide a successful plan of action for alternative narratives as *conceptions of the world*.

As for the aspects related to the historical film and the specific inquiries regarding the biopic genre, Spike Lee's *Malcolm X* offers a notable proposal that responds to the interests of the subaltern sectors, appropriating the dominant characteristics of the genre to drive alternative narratives to wider audiences by using the form of *historical allegory*. Through the use of generic conventions to explore Malcolm X's politics and its continued relevance while addressing the constancy of racial segregation within US society, Lee utilises the biopic as a practical tool for the struggles of marginalised groups, allowing their narratives to emerge into the bastions of mainstream culture. The successful impact of his work underscores our capacity to create alternative meanings of *the real* that are both urgent to our times and transcendent for the future, as allegories that speak both to us and to the coming generations. His transformative and dialectical approach to the genre and its hegemonic features provides a possible strategy to rethink history and shift the way it is told.

As this study is intimately linked to the research and writing process of a script based on a historical character, it has been necessary to study not only the limitations of historical film when dealing with these issues, but also the problematic features of the biopic. These can be summarised by the fact that as a genre it condenses historical complexities into the achievements of individual lives, something often used by the dominant *culture industries* to mould the general historical thinking accordingly, and thus preventing alternative forms of historical consciousness from erupting. It is because of this, and thanks to the analysis of the other cultural practices and interventions mentioned above that share concerns about the historical representation of the subaltern, that we have embraced the notion of *generic transformation*, as introduced by Mike Wayne. In order to expand it into the realm of the biopic, here we want to suggest a possible label for the change we aim to achieve: the *testimonial biopic*.

THE *TESTIMONIAL BIOPIC:* A PROPOSAL FOR *GENERIC TRANSFORMATION*

The *testimonial biopic* is a proposal for *generic transformation* inspired by alternative narratives of historical and biographical representation coming from counterhegemonic cultural practices. We must caution that this term does not aim to describe previous practices or the works of others, like Lee's *Malcolm X*. Instead, it solely appears regarding the work done on *They Call Me Rodolfo Walsh*. Thus, as the script does not exist as a film yet, the use of the label here is more a suggestion or an inspirational tool than an empirical statement. For this reason, we will not focus on its aesthetical or stylistic features in connection to *testimonio* or Third Cinema, but instead on its methodological aspects concerning various fields of commitment. This might help to develop a counterhegemonic plan of action when dealing with inquiries similar to those governing this study.

The term is not meant to become dogmatic or immovable, something that would go against the practical and dialectical method from which it results. Instead, it makes an explicit reference to Latin American *testimonio* as a narrative of the subaltern to underscore the shared concerns on historicity, politicisation, critical commitment and cultural specificity, something also common to Third Cinema and other experiences we have seen. We do not intend to use it as a schematist approach for the whole field of filmic biographical representation, but as a tool for composing a model elaborated through the combination of a particular screenwriting process and the reflections that accompanied it. The specific mention of testimonial literature in the label is also a tribute to the work of Walsh, as the precursor of the genre and the central character of the script attached to this proposal, as studying him originally inspired the whole project.

The *testimonial biopic* is proposed as a narrative strategy to bring historical figures from the subaltern sectors to the attention of wider audiences and especially those whose work was notably significant in their organic commitment to social change. We do not propose a constitution of a genre or subgenre from scratch. On the contrary, considering the qualities already present in the existing genres and the aspects that have made them popular and successful in achieving their own social goals, it is necessary to attend to their positive elements in this regard. Only by critically dialoguing with those, as well as with their limitations, are we able to build an alternative proposal of biographical representation that answers the needs of the subaltern. Thus, the *testimonial biopic* does not intend to totally reject the use of a device such as the *mythical character* often featured in the mainstream biopic, but instead to incorporate the importance of immediacy and the presence of the conflictive now into it, in order to position these narratives in the *two times*: the mythical and the urgent. As memory is key for the subaltern to both elaborate alternative conceptions of history and develop committed plans of action for change, its historical narratives need references that show how these aims got articulated politically in the past, in order to channel and enlighten the shared interests it has with today's political struggles. By doing this, the subaltern's memory takes part in forging an alternative *conception of the world*, using the popular *common sense* and

propelling it towards a new *good sense*. These are aspects that inevitably underline the wider political goals of the proposal.

As a proposal for *generic transformation*, and because the genre it aims at transforming is so closely related to *historytelling*, the *testimonial biopic* is rooted to those cultural practices that challenge the grounds of the construction of official history. Thus, it suggests a shift in the empathetic identification of the public with the historical subject, which necessarily also means a shift in the critical commitment of the public. Concerning this alternative view of the protagonist of history, it directs its attention towards those figures marginalised from hegemonic historical narratives, serving for the emergence of the subaltern and the articulation of its memory within the field of public culture. As for its narrative features, it is a proposal that aims at transforming both communicative and cognitive realms. Thus, by communicating hidden narratives specific to their local, national or popular spaces, the *testimonial biopic* should help the collective tales of the subaltern sectors to compete and gain access to the *intersubjective* field of knowledge.

The *testimonial biopic* is based on a practical and dialectical method. This means, on one hand, that it is through practice, as well as through the observation and analysis of other practices related to it, that its validity gets proved and its characteristics get modified. On the other hand, by positioning its goals opposite to the hegemonic forms, it constitutes alternative ways of approaching the challenges it faces and the new meanings it aspires to create. In this regard, and as inherited from studying Rodolfo Walsh's working method as well as those used by the other cultural practices analysed, the practice of *testimonial biopic* involves three methodological aspects, which we could label as three commitments, meant to cover its aims for historicity, politicisation, critical commitment and cultural specificity:

- Investigative commitment or investigation, which refers to the will to investigate in depth the aspects related to historicism and cultural specificity of the study subject.
- Critical commitment or criticism, which calls for the need of a critical attitude to the established notions of reality that have become assumed as *truth*.
- And political commitment, which refers to the inherent trust in the capacity of this practice to provide alternative meanings to the *commonsensical* social assumptions, so that new conceptions can emerge, providing useful tools to those struggles aiming for change.

This last commitment does not only organically channel the will to change, but it is also a commitment to knowledge in practical terms. In this regard, the political commitment aspects of this proposal refuse to embrace those relativist fashions that tend to claim no valid knowledge can ever be achieved. This does not mean support of naive determinist or positivist positions, but an extreme relativist stand towards the actual possibility of knowledge only leads in practice to allowing hegemonic positions to prevail and legitimate themselves. On the contrary, the political commitment we endorse here argues that temporary and practical knowledge not only

can be achieved but also is used constantly and on a daily basis. A commitment to knowledge is political because it aims to spur a rethinking of the established *conceptions of the world* and to confront them with alternative narratives. This commitment trusts in our capabilities to produce other meanings that can help in the dialectical struggle to constitute new understandings of reality, allowing the emergence of perspectives from the subaltern sectors. Narrative-makers as intellectuals compete in providing these *intersubjective* meanings through narrative, as this battle within the dialectics of knowledge is necessarily political and interested in practice.

Due to these thorough methodological tools, the *testimonial biopic* cannot result in clean myths separated from the mud of *the real* or bronze statues expecting to be revered. Even if the historical subjects might be chosen out of admiration and their achievements are meant to be represented in their filmic portrayal, the political urgency of recalling them for contemporary struggles and the critical investigative method of this proposal demands an emphasis on the link between the character and *the real* that cannot take place only in a mythical sphere, but also in the immediate mundane world.

Throughout this study, we have explored history as a process of interpretation and representation, and thus the intricate relationship it has with narrative. As we have seen, narrative, as a mechanism to conceive of the world and communicate different *conceptions of the world*, makes use of varied forms to convey some of these conceptions so that they become shared and agreed-upon knowledge. As part of these forms, genres operate as models to categorise and organise narratives according to the expectations of audiences in the reading of texts, facilitating the relationship between the public and the content. But as bearers of *intersubjective* conventions, genres are also forgers of *commonsensical* understandings of reality, often legitimating the established order of hegemony. That is, forming, moulding, alienating and manipulating audiences accordingly and thus establishing narrative *truths* that are collectively taken for granted. Due to the massive potential of cinema and its genres in this regard, the cognitive and communicative relevance of the historical film as one type of hybrid genre is then key in the construction of public historical thinking. But this very potential cannot be dismissed by those interested in seeking for alternative practical possibilities to transform the way we deal with *the real* within a wider agenda of change.

This is true in the case of the struggles of the subaltern sectors that compete for the representation of their *conceptions of the world*, elaborating narratives through a practical and dialectical approach with hegemony. Only by providing new meanings to the world and communicating alternative *truth-claims* and with the trust that this is possible and useful in practice, can the subaltern produce *forms appropriate* to introduce its silenced voice into the shared realm of knowledge, something essential for shifting the dominant social order it fights. Knowledge then becomes political. And for that reason, it appears seminal to subvert, and not reject, the dominant modes of communication that shape our *intersubjective* knowledge. One

of the possible ways to do this is by transforming genres, as they are collective codes we share to channel our narratives or *conceptions of the world*.

Therefore, as a plan of action committed to a wider political agenda of social change, the proposal behind the *testimonial biopic* offers to the historical and biographical film a program to rethink its *commonsensical* forms and take a qualitative leap towards a new *good sense*, where official history is confronted and the memories, aspirations, struggles and references of the subaltern get represented.

APPENDIX 1

ON THE RESEARCH AND WRITING PROCESS OF THE SCRIPT *THEY CALL ME RODOLFO WALSH* (*ME LLAMAN RODOLFO WALSH*)

This appendix is a mere prefatory note to the research and writing process of the script *They Call Me Rodolfo Walsh* (*Me Llaman Rodolfo Walsh*), because, as discussed in the introduction of this study, the whole work emerged as a reflection inspired by this experience. Thus, this part explores the long working process the project has gone through, including information on the research trips and fieldwork made in Argentina, as well as on the different versions of the treatment developed in preparation for writing the script. Here I also briefly touch upon the main aspects concerning the dramatic structure of the final draft of the script. And finally, I include a list of the most relevant materials used for the research and the writing of *They Call Me Rodolfo Walsh*.

Nevertheless, I think it is worth clarifying that for a long time I dedicated much of my research work to this script, because I initially intended to publish it along with my dissertation. There are several reasons why this did not happen after all. Some of them are notably practical, such as the case that it was originally written in Spanish and meant to be filmed in that language, so many language codes could get lost in its translation or would require long explanations to clarify their full meanings. Additionally, the mere fact that the final draft is 146 pages also made it difficult to include it in here. There are two more reasons that are key to understanding the decision to avoid its publication. On one hand, as a filmmaker I understand that a film script is never finished until the film is actually shot, edited and released. Even if I consider it as a final draft at this point, the conditions under which this version of the script was written have been *too ideal*: production contingencies, obstacles, negotiations or any other unknown variables, which are so common to any film production, have not provoked any kind of –often necessary– creative compromises thus far. Therefore, this is the purist and possibly the most unrealistic version of the script: the result of a long period of research and writing process without external interferences. On the other hand, the other reason for this decision has to do with the risks that publishing the script might mean for the possibilities of developing the project as an actual film production, which are an unknown but real threat that as filmmaker I would prefer not to take.

WORKING PROCESS AND STAGES

The first time I heard about Rodolfo Walsh was through my father quite sometime ago. My father, who had been teaching literature for several decades, had a copy of Walsh's *Operation Massacre* (*Operación Masacre*) that a colleague had given him as a gift some years before. He introduced me to Walsh's story briefly and I was immediately impressed and intrigued. I then started searching for information and material about him. In Spain, where I am from, Walsh was rather unknown and until around 2010 it was almost impossible to find anything else from or about him but *Operation Massacre*, which was only published by a tiny publishing house.[532] Nevertheless, I was able to gather quite a large amount of literary material through the internet, as well as some documentary film works about Walsh, to start learning about him.

Besides my attraction to the quality of his writings and their content, there were two reasons why I was so profoundly fascinated by Walsh and his story from the first minute. First, I felt a strong interest and personal link towards his political commitment and how it interacted with his literary work, probably due to certain concerns regarding my own artistic activity. And second, I also felt Walsh's story contained astonishing dramaturgical possibilities, essential and powerful elements necessary to transmit the complexity of his figure and time, as well as the urgency and transcendence of bringing both to a wider public scene, which for me is one of the main purposes for making cinema.

Then, in 2008 I was preparing the content of a course at the Academy of Fine Arts of Helsinki that was part of the educational program of Lens Politica, the festival I helped to establish and directed until 2011. One of the literary sources I was using was Naomi Klein's *The Shock Doctrine*, which dedicated a few pages to the figure of Walsh, focusing particularly on his *Open Letter of a Writer to the Military Junta*. Klein, who lived briefly in Argentina where she wrote Avi Lewis' documentary, *The Take* (2004), underlined in her book Walsh's current value in connection to the central thesis of her book: the antidemocratic basis of neoliberal policies.

By that time, I was already working on the research topic for my doctoral studies in the Department of Film and Television at Aalto University. I had been working on the Other as the leading theme for it, but my approach was still vaguely structured and notably influenced by a more existentialist perspective borrowed from Jean-Paul Sartre, though some other aspects related to colonialism and the *colonial mentality* were inspired by the work of Frantz Fanon. Nevertheless, I was already planning these studies to be practice-led, and thus I had proposed to write a dramatic script as part of them, though the actual content of it was still unclear. Learning about Walsh, his life, work and context, as well as the contemporary significance I saw in his figure, awoke a profound interest in me and this enthusiasm eventually helped me to define the practical goals of my research. I decided then to study him

532] After 2010, some other Walsh's works started to be published in Spain for the first time by 451 Editores and Veintisiete Letras.

in depth and write a script about him. Therefore, incorporating this work into my study plan became a somehow natural choice.

With this plan approved, in 2009 I spent some months taking a screenwriting for features workshop in New York. During those months I started to dig deeper into my study of Walsh and, even if it might sound irrelevant, I purchased some of the most significant materials about him that proved to be essential later on, such as the seminal book of Eduardo Jozami, *Rodolfo Walsh. The Word and the Action*, which greatly helped me to organise my knowledge and thoughts about him. I started to collect all the information I could on the topic, surprised by how unknown he was outside Argentina. At some point, as putting together enough literary material and gathering firsthand testimonies was so difficult from a distance, I thought I should travel to Argentina to do some direct fieldwork.

Before travelling to Argentina, I was lucky enough to spend almost three weeks in Havana, Cuba. I had been invited to present at a festival my short *United We Stand* (2009), which had been done as part of my studies originally, and decided to stay a few days after to do some preliminary research on Walsh, as he had lived there from 1959 to 1961 and visited the island a few times after that. One of the key encounters I had there was with film director Manuel Pérez, who had visited Lens Politica back in 2008, and with whom I had kept in touch since then. He knew of my interest on Walsh from the time we met in Helsinki and thus he gave me two contacts that would become crucial to the whole research process. One was at Casa de las Américas, which opened their doors to me and allowed me to collect copies of all the material on Walsh they had in their archive, including an LP record of him reading three of his texts, of which they gave me a copy. In compensation, I provided them with all the digital material I had managed to find, much of which they did not have. The other contact was even more relevant for the subsequent episodes. Manuel introduced me to a man who had been in close contact with Walsh during his various stays in Cuba. He had also clandestinely helped many of the members of Montoneros, including its leaders, to escape from the Argentine repression during the Junta years. We immediately found a lot of common interests to discuss and thus, without expecting it, this encounter would become essential to getting a favourable response to my research in Argentina. The trust in his name definitely opened many doors and voices that otherwise would have remained closed, distant or suspicious.

Soon after, in 2010, my first research trip to Argentina took place, and I spent a month and a half in Buenos Aires researching Walsh. On that trip, I collected a vast amount of testimonies and literary sources, many of which otherwise would have been inaccessible from my home institution. The fieldwork also made me realise how far I was from knowing and understanding almost anything about the depth of this character and his cultural, social and political environment. Nevertheless, during the time in Buenos Aires, I started to explore possible research and writing methods, many inherited from learning about Walsh's. And thus, from the very beginning, in order to deal with the amount of data gathered and inquire as to its dramatic potential, I split a board in two columns: one for all the information collected about Walsh and the other for the connection of it with his historical environment. It was then that intuitively

I started to explore the possible filmic narrative ways for telling Walsh's story and showing his complex personality. However, this first attempt to organise the dramatic structure of the work proved to contain very few certainties and remained constantly open to new and vast incoming data that frequently modified its original intentions.

Besides the large amount of literary sources collected during this trip, I held a series of long interviews, which allowed me to accumulate many firsthand testimonies full of information, anecdotes and varied points of view about him that otherwise I could have not found anywhere else. The people interviewed included: Walsh's last wife Lilia Ferreyra, who had stayed with him the last ten years of his life and accompanied him in his militancy until the very last day; writers and friends Ricardo Piglia and Eduardo Galeano, whom I visited in Montevideo, Uruguay; authors who had studied him such as Roberto Baschetti –a sociologist and researcher in the National Library of Argentina, who also allowed me to visit his huge personal archive–, Enrique Arrosagaray and Eduardo Jozami, who also shared Walsh's militancy in Montoneros and today runs the Cultural Centre for the Memory Haroldo Conti, installed in the former military detention centre ESMA; Walsh's close friend and prominent journalist Rogelio García Lupo, with whom he shared several important stages of his life, including the research of the Satanowsky's case –which ended up being one of Walsh's testimonial novels–, the time in the news agency Prensa Latina in Cuba and the work for the CGTA's revolutionary union weekly paper CGT; Francisco Alonso, who is also one of the characters in *Who Killed Rosendo?*, and Eduardo Pérez, who shared with Walsh their militancy in CGTA and FAP; the Montonero leader Roberto Perdía and Jorge Lewinger, who was Walsh's superior in the organisation at one point; and the three members of ANCLA in Montoneros, Lila Pastoriza, Lucila Pagliai and Carlos Aznárez, who were under Walsh's command in the last year of his life. Unfortunately, for many varied reasons, others refused to be interviewed, some because important trials regarding the repression of the dictatorship were taking place during this visit, and thus they had no time or energy to deal with this issue outside of that context.

The load of information to handle after this trip was huge. The interviews and literature accumulated contained the core substance necessary to organise and build the story on one hand and the drama on the other. This included, among others, the books by Baschetti and Arrosagaray, whose works provide many anecdotes very useful for writing the drama. The information was naturally classified in two categories: primary sources –every material from Walsh himself– and secondary sources –every material about Walsh, including books, magazines, websites, archives, interviews and documentaries or other media works. Other materials were also useful for contextualising the period as well as those crucial aspects of Argentine history. Thus, the whole idea of the dramatic structure started to get formed while being continually revisited and transformed by the incoming discoveries from every source.

Therefore, the relationship between data and drama was notably organic, and then the first obstacles to designing a narrative pattern for the story necessarily included confronting the inquiries of interpretation and representation of *histo-*

rytelling, particularly in the biographical realm. It was at this point, when I was finally facing the dramatic organisation of Walsh's life out of all the material collected, that I started to question how I could match drama and story accurately and whether aspects such as taking certain licenses and even inventions might be necessary to provide meaning to the drama, according to standards of artistic verisimilitude over solely those of scientific verifiability. I then started to explore how narratives are generally constructed and the different forms they can take, especially in the film context. And eventually this led me to also wonder how others had dealt successfully before with marginalised characters that questioned the very *commonsensical* foundations of our understanding of reality and have committed to change, like Walsh. This ultimately drove me to explore the case of Spike Lee's work about Malcolm X. And within this context, on a theoretical level, the figure of Antonio Gramsci emerged then as an unavoidable reference for coping with all these questions and with the figure of Walsh. It was through his thinking that I found an integral vehicle for managing those concerns related to hegemony in constructing *intersubjectively* our *conceptions of the world* as *common sense*, the role of the *organic intellectual* in this process and a proposal to shift our focus on the subject of history, by questioning *who owns* it, and moving towards a new *good sense* that could favour social change.

I then worked on several versions of an extensive outline for the script by the fall of 2010. This helped me to establish a first approach to the dramatic structure, though it was yet far from a definitive version. Originally, in this vague and unfinished stage, the outline was split into three long parts or episodes, so it took a form that was closer to that of a mini series, even if that was not necessarily my actual intention. After many revisions of the outline, by the end of 2010 I started to write a long and detailed treatment that would help to put all the relevant information within a type of narrative and dramatic structure. To call it a treatment, in the traditional sense it is used in the screenwriting field, would be rather adventurous though: this kind of treatment was closer to a novel-like approach to the story and character than to an average film treatment, which usually synthesises plot and other dramatic details in favour of its narrative or atmospheric features. On the contrary, this document was extremely detailed, even over detailed, but it helped me to link the data about his character and those about his historical context, which was its primary function. Nevertheless, it was presented as a scene-by-scene structure, and thus it contained many aspects that concerned the drama of the story, including many dialogues, even if sketchy or too literal. Still divided into three parts or episodes, these details were meant to help in the forging of the dramatic script later, as they actually did.

I continued revisiting and rewriting different versions of this three-part novel-like treatment during 2011 and 2012, and the last draft contained 140 pages –Cambria font, 12 point with single spacing. The size of this document was notably too long and far too detailed for what should be used in a script. The final aim for the script I had in mind was something between 140 and 160 pages of the standardised script format, which occupies a lot more with less text –Courier font, 12 point and

the spacing, special margins and tab settings for dialogues, parentheticals, transitions, etc., designed to equal one page to one minute, even if that is a very imprecise science. In other words, a straight translation of the novel-like treatment to the script format would have made it a far too large and unrealistic document for the type of feature film production I was intending for, as it would have been maybe 500 pages or even more.

Through this process, and while my research on the reflections it had provoked had already started as well, many doubts and questions appeared again. Many had to do with the dramatic structure and its accurate relationship with the events, and also with how verisimilitude and taking certain licences or inventions could favour the drama and emphasise the themes of the script. But it was also at this point that many gaps of information emerged, especially regarding some periods of Walsh's life that seemed rather unknown or undocumented from a more personal perspective. For instance, the last year of his life, which he spent primarily in hiding, seemed clear from a public perspective –what he thought about the political situation, what he did in his militancy. But, as drama and characters are built on emotions too, it was essential to find out more about what he felt and how he lived in his private realm.

I realised then that new firsthand testimonies were needed to cover both the missing data and the intimacy of Walsh. I noticed that probably many of the first interviews in 2010 had been too superficial –they had focused too much on filling the most basic gaps in the information I had, due to my lack of knowledge about hi character and his context. And even if the major facts I had gathered were essential for the process, many of these interviews had missed much about the character to be fully significant for the purpose of writing a dramatic script about him –they lacked "the essence of the man", as Spike Lee called it. While new literary materials I collected helped in this direction –notably Michael McCaughan's *True Crimes: Rodolfo Walsh. The Life and Times of a Radical Intellectual*–, I decided to take a second research trip in 2012 to Argentina, in order to revise the validity of the work done so far, explore the arising doubts in depth and excavate into the unknown and more intimate world of Walsh. This second fieldwork trip took about a month.

Thus, I held new and thorough interviews, with a special emphasis on the encounter with Lilia Ferreyra, who opened up her place to me and showed me many of Walsh's personal belongings, while providing a portrait of him that was full of details regarding their life together and anecdotes that helped to construct a better dramatic character and story. Other in-depth interviews were made with Lila Pastoriza, Lucila Pagliai, Carlos Aznárez, Roberto Perdía and Eduardo Jozami, as well as fruitful encounters with Roberto Baschetti and Enrique Arrosagaray, who took me to the Villaflor's house in Avellaneda, as they were central characters in Walsh's testimonial novel *Who Killed Rosendo?*, as well as in my script. During this trip I also collected new literary materials that became key for the rewriting process, discovering new significant elements and stories that helped to improve the drama, such as Hugo Montero and Ignacio Portela's *Rodolfo Walsh. Los Años Montoneros*, among others. Otherwise, some first approaches to the production potential of the

project took place as well, including an encounter with members of Argentina's National Institute of Cinema and Audiovisual Arts (INCAA).

After carefully studying the new data accumulated during this trip, I rewrote the treatment, giving it its final shape. From the revised treatment, I started to work on the design of a new outline for writing the script. Looking for a coherent way to approach it for a feature-length film and avoiding the three episodes of dramatic structure that had been used previously, I elaborated this outline as a simplified scheme of the original treatment. Thus, even if I had already made many dramatic compromises throughout the previous process that would condition the writing of the script, and concurrently with the reflections about the importance of narrative in forming our *conceptions of the world*, it was now time to take greater license with the script. These would necessarily simplify the storyline, underscore the main plot, reduce and erase other subplots, and also propose certain dramatic liberties and inventions, while remaining faithful to the *truth* of the character, composing scenes, unifying secondary characters and readjusting *the real* for the benefit of the drama and the emergence of its theme. In other words, designing a dramatic pattern of life for Walsh. Thus, while the three episodes structure was erased, the major dramatic structure remained rather similar to the one elaborated in the treatment. With the deepening of the screenwriting work, the simplification of all the elements mentioned above helped to make clearer the thematic aspects of the drama.

By the spring of 2013, I started working on writing the script, adapting what had been originally the first episode of the three in the novel-like treatment. That part became around 90 pages. Then I continued working on the other two in the outline. When the second two parts got clearer, I decided to do my final research trip to Argentina in the spring 2014, in order to finish a version of the entire script while consulting with some of the main interviewees on some of the bigger problems of cultural specificity I had noticed during this new screenwriting process. I then completed a first draft of the script, which was close to 180 pages, unifying under a feature structure the original three parts of the treatment with notable changes. Thus, for example, the 90 pages of the first episode adapted to the script were cut down to something around 60 pages. Nevertheless, during this stage many other inquiries about the structure of the drama appeared and I then worked on rewriting the draft during the summer of 2014 until it got to be the final version I comment on here. This ended up being 146 pages.

ON THE DRAMATIC STRUCTURE

The structure of the storytelling became essential to favouring the construction of the drama and the emergence of its theme. All the dramatic decisions, including those liberties taken with the factual record and historical accuracy, had to serve a coherent and compelling narrative, while at the same time being faithful to the *truth* of the character. It was then a matter of creative choice to decide on the storyline: where to start and end, what to emphasise, how to expose and relate the

actions and key events that would allow the theme to arise from the drama. Thus, the point of view I decided to take on these matters was essential for defining and empowering certain issues, as well as in the construction of the plot and the development of Walsh as a character –and, of course, all the others. Other aspects had been naturally present all the way throughout the process, such as the question of genre, as the biopic is the genre that focuses on the life of a real character, which applied to this particular case. And others, like the style that would affect the aesthetics, even if uncertain due to the embryonic phase of this project as a film, aimed at inheriting a great influence, almost instinctively, from Walsh's writings and investigative methods, especially those regarding his foundational contributions to *testimonio*. So even if it would be too adventurous to discuss these issues at this point, there was from the beginning a will in the screenwriting that this should reflect a style that could favour a fragmented use of time to drive the shifts from Walsh's active to reflexive modes. As Walsh's writings were largely adapted inside the script and his methods also served as a major reference during the research process, it was important for the style to put forward his voice as a first person testimonial narrator, in order to provide meaning to all these fragments that would unite Walsh's memory. By using his texts I intended to also make use of and acquire his elaborated simplicity and avoidance of vacuous glittery language games.

While considering all the historical data collected on Walsh's life and his context, I concluded that there was an element that provided meaning to the whole of his character, to his evolving engagement with the cultural and political panoramas of his time, as well as to his personal experiences attached to it. This was where the theme met the *truth* of the character. Therefore, defining this theme meant also deciding upon the dramatic *truth* of this particular embodiment of Walsh. This aspect that gave sense to his dramatic character and which became the central thematic line in the elaboration of the script was his transition: from being a journalist and a writer with clear goals of professional recognition to getting involved actively in a guerrilla organisation; from the writing of *Operation Massacre* and his other books, to his journalist and investigative commitment within the revolutionary union organisation CGTA, to then deepen his political involvement within the guerrilla movements FAP first and Montoneros later. This transition in Walsh, as well as the dilemmas it carried with it, could also speak allegorically of an entire era in which culture and politics met and collapsed in their search for alternative and committed forms for representing *truth*.

But this transition in Walsh's life was not linear nor smooth. Instead it was full of contradictions, dilemmas and controversies, including huge internal struggles, which enriched the dramatic spectrum of the character. The final episode of his life, when in delivering the *Open Letter...* he faced death fighting the dictatorial corps trying to capture him, also meant the point of encounter between both his literary mastery and his political and militant commitment, raising the final stage of his transition to a significant dramatic level.

The script covered around twenty years of Walsh's life: from the research and publication of *Operation Massacre* in 1956 and 1957, which, in his words "changed

his life", to his death in 1977. Besides the somewhat inaccurate linearity of his transition, for dramatic purposes it was also necessary to find and design a coherent line in his life that could provide us with a clear portrait of the dramatic Walsh within a viable feature length script.

But another aspect that became central during this process was the importance of memory in Walsh's work, as a political and collective realm of the subaltern sectors opposed to the official narratives of history and reality. It was then crucial to find a way to represent memory in a script about Walsh, particularly his own memory about his own experience of life. While struggling with the organic relationship between data and drama in the treatment, the project went from an initial linear structure to a fragmentary one that allowed the incorporation of memory into the storytelling. Thus, Walsh's *present time* would be represented, digging deeper and deeper into the traces that he followed in the past that led him to the final stage of his life, revealing his self-reflection on the direction his life has taken.

Fortunately Walsh's own reflections on culture, politics and his own life were largely published, both through his public and private writings. And these primary sources served not only to build scenes and dialogues, as did other secondary sources as well, but also to conduct the forging of Walsh's memory in the drama through the use of his voiceover as narrator of the story, especially in transitions, montages and flashbacks. The attempt to build Walsh's memory out of his texts drastically affected the point of view of the work, as the use of his writings tried to encapsulate the way Walsh recalled the links between his past and present in forming and transforming the *now* –a *now* in which his *self* appeared constructed and inscribed as part of a collective process of becoming. Thus, his memory was not just meant to be exposed, but mainly meant to be experienced and felt.

Therefore, these two aspects would condition the development of the script entirely: Walsh's transition as the dramatic *truth* of the character on one hand, and the relevance of representing his memory for telling the story on the other. And then, for that purpose of supporting both aspects, I worked on the structure using three interlaced timelines.

The first of these timelines defined the drama. As it contained the core dramatic narrative of the script, it helped to clearly illustrate the transition Walsh went through from 1967, when he was receiving a salary to write a novel, until 1977, when he was killed and disappeared. There was an element in his personal life that provided a certain unity to this period. From 1967 to 1977 he was involved emotionally with only one woman: Lilia Ferreyra. But there were other aspects that gave dramatic coherence to this timeline. As we have noted, by the time Walsh met Ferreyra, he was struggling to write his first fiction novel, as the expectations around him as a writer were quite high due to the success of his short story books and the Boom phenomenon taking place in Latin America. Walsh was therefore receiving a salary from his editor for this purpose, something that he never achieved. Instead he got into debt while developing an internal conflict between his role as an intellectual and the actions that the times demanded –between word and action.

Also, in October of 1967, Che Guevara was murdered in Bolivia, an event that had a huge impact in Latin America, both in the cultural and the political scene, as we discussed in Chapter 3. For Walsh, who had been in Cuba for the first two years of the Cuban Revolution working in Prensa Latina, the news agency promoted by Guevara himself, this tragedy had a massive resonance. As proof of it, Walsh wrote a text entitled *Guevara* to praise the revolutionary figure soon after learning about his death. During those months, Walsh received an invitation to return to Cuba for the Cultural Congress in January of 1968, an event that was massively attended by relevant intellectuals from all over the world. In it he gave a public reading of his text on Guevara. On his way back to Argentina, he visited Perón, exiled in Madrid. Argentina, under a military dictatorship and where the Peronist movement was banned, was in constant convulsion. Perón knew of his influence on the working class, but he also recognised the impact of Cuba and Guevara's death within that context. He was then able to embrace certain actions of the revolutionary movements for striking, not only the military regime, but also the bureaucratic wing of the Peronist movement that negotiated with the dictatorship. It was within that context that Walsh met Perón, with both doubts and admiration for the political leader. And it was in that meeting that Perón introduced him to the Peronist revolutionary unionist Raimundo Ongaro and suggested that they both work together. With Ongaro, Walsh would get deeply involved in the world of the working class, and influenced by Lenin's theory of the revolutionary press, he would direct the weekly publication CGT, providing the workers with a tool for their struggles. For this project, Walsh would bring together a team of brilliant journalists and carry out some of his most relevant investigations, such as the one that ended up becoming his testimonial novel *Who Killed Rosendo?* Due to this deepening in his political commitment, which forced him to go underground soon after, Walsh would also freeze his fiction literary activity, which in the case of his novel was definitive. This would push him even deeper into his involvement in political action, until he ended up joining the guerrilla organisations during the last years of his life.

Thus, keeping in mind the theme and due to several elements that gave certain unity to it, 1967 seemed to mark a starting point of a timeline that provided a clear sense of this transition of Walsh as a dramatic character that finished in 1977 with his tragic death. Summing up, this unity could be found mainly, though not exclusively, in two things:

- His enduring relationship with Lilia, who accompanied Walsh's emotional world until he was murdered, while also sharing the militant political activity and becoming his main confidant.
- His increasingly active political commitment that crystallised with his involvement in revolutionary organisations, which would condition his relationship with literature and the cultural field, putting it into crisis, as well as his work's definitive evolution from fiction writing to investigative journalism, organic and testimonial writings.

Nevertheless, this main timeline could not alone provide the whole complexity of his character and the role of memory in the storytelling, as it would leave aside meaningful episodes that had a great importance in the forging of his personality and in the decisions he would take in his process of becoming. Thus, I associated this timeline to events from previous periods of Walsh's life through flashbacks and montages, offering a fragmented reconstruction of his remembered past. This second timeline focused on Walsh's life from 1956 and 1957 –the years of the investigation and publication of *Operation Massacre*– to 1967, when the main timeline starts. Even if secondary in dramatic terms, this narrative timeline was essential for exposing memory as shaper of his character, linking past and present and helping to build up the complexity of plot and character. These scenes also included Walsh's time in Cuba and other aspects of his personal life before meeting Lilia Ferreyra. In them, though not only here, Walsh's voiceover as a narrator led the time transitions in a reflexive manner.

The third timeline of the script is the shortest of the three, but condensed within it is the main theme of the drama, while it also contains efforts to empower the emotional and thrilling potential of the story. This timeline covered the last two days of Walsh's life and was split into two segments: one at the beginning and one at the end of the script. The first part of it included the following: the finishing of the *Open Letter...* the last night of his life; and the celebration of finishing it with Ferreyra, where they discuss the preparations for delivering it the next day and Walsh asks Ferreyra to loan him her gun for protection. The second part depicted the next morning in which Walsh and Ferreyra put the *Open Letter...* in envelopes; their way to the train, the trip to Buenos Aires and the time when they separate at the railway station to deliver the *Open Letter...*; the delivery through mailboxes in the city; the ambush, shooting and assassination of Walsh, where he tries to resist by shooting back with the small gun Ferreyra lent him; Ferreyra's discovery of Walsh's disappearance and her escape; and the information on what happened afterwards with the *Open Letter...*

By opening and closing the script with this, this timeline operated as a portrayal of Walsh's *present time*, unifying the whole script around its thematic elements: Walsh's life transition and memory. As the first part of it gets interrupted when Walsh asks for the gun after writing the *Open Letter...* –of which content we do not know anything at the beginning– and then the story moves back to the main timeline, when he started his relationship with Ferreyra ten years before, this aims at suggesting two inquiries, one by the audience and the other by the character, that try to build the interest in the story from the beginning:

- First, and underscoring the intriguing thematic element of the transition from writer to active militant, this segment means to bring up a few questions in the spectator: why would someone who has only written a letter need a gun to deliver it? What type of letter is it? What context could make something like this happen? And mainly, what kind of character could be involved in such a thing? This means to stimulate the spectator's motivation to know more.

- And second, emphasising the relevance of memory in the structure of the script, the interruption and jump to the main timeline, accompanied by the use of Walsh's voiceover, pushes the character –as if wondering how did I get here?– to dive into his own memory: what brought him to this particular point in his life where he needs a gun to defend himself while delivering a letter? In other words, how time forged his life until this dramatic present situation.

As a timeline meant to condense central thematic elements that will unfold throughout the rest of the drama, the presence of the *Open Letter*... and the gun at the beginning of the script helps to economically expose the main questions that the text wants to address regarding the character and his life, while also suggesting other essential aspects of the historical times that surrounded him. Thus, in representing the culmination of Walsh's transition, the *Open Letter*... and the gun, as images of the word and the action, finally meet both harmonically and tragically before opening the end of the script to the urgency and transcendence of his final action. And as such, we then learn that the *Open Letter*... actually broke the *informative siege* of the dictatorship and became one of the most emblematic symbols of the resistance to it.

Otherwise, besides these three timelines over which the script is built, there is an exception to them in the script that must be pointed out. The text opens with a sequence of Walsh's childhood adapted from his autobiographical short story *1937*, in which Walsh confronts the violent authority of a nun in his boarding school by taking an entire punishment staring at her without a single complaint. As this sequence is the only reference to that period of Walsh's life, the aim of using it at the very beginning, before the drama is developed, means to work as a preface, introducing the core of the character's personality, as it is later developed throughout the script.

Last but not least, the title of the script –*Me Llaman Rodolfo Walsh*– is taken from the opening words of Walsh's brief autobiographical note, which is partly used throughout the text as part of the narrator's voiceover. The sentence itself is a common word game in Spanish, because the regular way to introduce oneself is to say "me llamo...", which would translate as "I call myself...", though it actually means "my name is..." By joking and writing "me llaman...", Walsh was underscoring that it was the others who called him that name, thus making him up and building his *self*. That emphasis on how the *self* is constructed *intersubjectively*, on the relationship between the *self* and the collective, was the main reason to take his own sentence, used to introduce himself in the autobiographical note, as the proper way to expose in the title of the script all these aspects that define the complexity of such a character and his relationship with his time.

REFERENCES

The following is a list of some of the most significant sources used for the research and the writing of *They Call Me Rodolfo Walsh*.

Adamovsky, Ezequiel 2012, *Historia de las Clases Populares en la Argentina: Desde 1880 hasta 2003*, Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana.
Adoue, Silvia Beatriz 2011, *Walsh, el Criptógrafo. Escritura y Acción Política en la Obra de Rodolfo Walsh*, Buenos Aires: Editorial El Colectivo and Dialektik.
Amar Sánchez, Ana María 1992, *El Relato de los Hechos. Rodolfo Walsh: Testimonio y Escritura*, Rosario: Beatriz Viterbo Editora.
Amorín, José 2005, *Montoneros: La Buena Historia*, Buenos Aires: Catálogos Editores.
Anguita, Eduardo and Caparrós, Martín 2011, *La Voluntad (Tomos 1 a 5)*, Buenos Aires: Booket.
Arrosagaray, Enrique 2004, *Rodolfo Walsh en Cuba. Agencia Prensa Latina, Militancia, Ron y Criptografía*, Buenos Aires: Catálogos Editores.
–– 2006, *Rodolfo Walsh, de Dramaturgo a Guerrillero*, Buenos Aires: Catálogos Editores.
–– 1993, *Los Villaflor de Avellaneda*, Buenos Aires: Ediciones de la Flor.

Badaró, Máximo and Forné, Anna (ed.) 2011, 'Memorias de la Represión en Argentina y Uruguay: Narrativas, Actores e Instituciones', *Stockholm Review of Latin American Studies*, 7, Institute of Latin American Studies Stockholms Universitet.
Baschetti, Roberto (ed.) 1994, *Rodolfo Walsh, Vivo*, Buenos Aires: Ediciones de la Flor.
–– 2009, *La Clase Obrera Peronista (Volumen 1 y 2)*, Buenos Aires: De La Campana.
Bayer, Osvaldo and Gelman, Juan 2009, *Exilio*, Buenos Aires: Editorial La Página.
Bertranou, Eleonora 2006, *Rodolfo Walsh: Argentino, Escritor y Militante*, Buenos Aires: Editorial Leviatán.
Bonasso, Miguel 2010, *Diario de un Clandestino*, Buenos Aires: Editorial Planeta.
–– 2010, *Recuerdo de la Muerte*, Buenos Aires: Editorial Planeta.
–– 2010, *El Presidente que no fue. Los Archivos Ocultos del Peronismo*, Buenos Aires: Editorial Planeta.
Bufano, Sergio and Lotersztain, Israel (eds.), *Evita Montonera. Revisión Crítica de la Revista Oficial de Montoneros*, Buenos Aires: Ejercitar la Memoria Editores.

Calveiro, Pilar 2008, *Poder y Desaparición. Los Campos de Concentración en Argentina*, Buenos Aires: Ediciones Calihue.
–– 2005, *Política y/o Violencia. Una Aproximación a la Guerrilla de los Años 70*, Buenos Aires: Grupo Editorial Norma.
Casa de las Américas, 46, January-February 1968.
Casa de las Américas, 200, July-September 1995.
CGT, 1 to 55.

Di Meglio, Gabriel, *Historia de las Clases Populares en la Argentina. Desde 1516 hasta 1880*, Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana.
Drucaroff, Elsa 2010, *El Último Caso de Rodolfo Walsh. Una Novela*, Buenos Aires: Grupo Editorial Norma.
Duhalde, Eduardo Luis and Pérez, Eduardo 2003, *De Taco Ralo a la Alternativa Independiente. Tomo I: las FAP*, Buenos Aires: De la Campana.

'El Periodismo Según Walsh', *Sudestada de Colección*, 10.
http://www.elortiba.org/walsh.html (and subsequent sites)
Esquivada, Gabriela 2010, *Noticias de los Montoneros*, Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana.

Gillespie, Richard 2008, *Soldados de Perón. Historia Crítica sobre los Montoneros*, Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana.
Gilman, Claudia 2003, *Entre la Pluma y el Fusil: Debates y Dilemas del Escritor Revolucionario en América Latina*, Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI Editores.
Grasselli, Fabiana 2010, 'Concepto de Vanguardia y Escritura Testimonial en los Programas Estético-Políticos de Rodolfo Walsh y Francisco Urondo', *Espectáculo-Revista de Estudios Literarios*, in: https://pendientedemigracion.ucm.es/info/especulo/numero45/walsuron.html
–– 2012, 'Una Literatura Peligrosa: Relatos Testimoniales y Sectores Subalternos en el Programa Estético-Político de Rodolfo Walsh', *Estudio Sociales Contemporáneos*, 7/8.
–– 2012, 'Rodolfo Walsh y Francisco Urondo, el Oficio de Escribir', in: http://www.eumed.net/tesis-doctorales/2012/fg/politizacion-arte-Rodolfo-Walsh.html
–– and Salomone, Mariano 2011, 'La Escritura Testimonial de Rodolfo Walsh: Politización del Arte y Experiencia Histórica', *Aisthesis*, 49.

Hechos y Protagonistas de las Luchas Obreras Argentinas, 3, March 1984.

James, Daniel 2010, *Resistencia e Integración. El Peronismo y la Clase Trabajadora Argentina, 1946-1976*, Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI Editores.
Jozami, Eduardo 2011, *Rodolfo Walsh. La Palabra y la Acción*, Second Edition, Buenos Aires: Grupo Editorial Norma and Página/12.
–– 2006, *Rodolfo Walsh. La Palabra y la Acción*, First Edition, Buenos Aires: Grupo Editorial Norma.

Klein, Naomi 2008, *The Shock Doctrine*, New York: Metropolitan Books.

Lafforgue, Jorge (ed.), *Textos de y sobre Rodolfo Walsh*, 2000, Buenos Aires: Alianza Editorial.
Larraquy, Marcelo 2007, *López Rega. El Peronismo y la Triple A*, Buenos Aires: Punto de Lectura.
Lotersztain, Cacho and Bufano, Sergio (eds.) 2012, *ANCLA. Rodolfo Walsh y la Agencia de Noticias Clandestina: 1976-1977*, Buenos Aires: Ejercitar la Memoria Editores.

Masetti, Jorge Ricardo 2006, *Los que Luchan y los que Lloran, y Otros Escritos Inéditos*, Buenos Aires: Nuestra América Editorial.
Martín Peña, Fernando 2013, *El Cine Quema. Jorge Cedrón*, Buenos Aires: INCAA.
McCaughan, Michael 2002, *True Crimes: Rodolfo Walsh. The Life and Times of a Radical Intellectual*, London: Latin America Bureau.
Mestman, Mariano 1997, 'Semanario CGT. Rodolfo Walsh: Periodismo y Clase Obrera', *Causas y Azares*, 6.
–– and Varela, Mirta (ed.) 2013, *Masas, Pueblo, Multitud en Cine y Televisión*, Buenos Aires: Eudeba.
Montero, Hugo and Portela, Ignacio 2010, *Rodolfo Walsh. Los Años Montoneros*, Buenos Aires: Ediciones Continente.

Nadra, Giselle and Nadra, Yamilé 2011, *Montoneros. Ideología y Política en El Descamisado*, Buenos Aires: Ediciones Corregidor.

O'Donell, Pancho (ed.) 2012, *La Otra Historia. El Revisionismo Nacional, Popular y Federalista*, Buenos Aires: Ariel.
Ongaro, Raimundo 2001, *CGT de los Argentinos*, Buenos Aires: COGTAL
'Operación Rodolfo Walsh', *Primera Plana*, 489, 13th June 1972.
Oteiza, Enrique (ed.), *Cultura y Política en los Años 60*, Buenos Aires: Ediciones CBC.

P4R+ (2000), documentary directed by Gustavo Gordillo.
Perdía, Roberto Cirilo 1997, *La Otra Historia. Testimonio de un Jefe Montonero*, Río Negro: Grupo Agora.
Piglia, Ricardo 2000, 'Tres Propuestas para el Próximo Milenio (y Cinco Dificultades)', in: http://www.casa.co.cu/publicaciones/revistacasa/222/piglia.htm

http://www.ruinasdigitales.com/

Seoane, María 2007, *Rodolfo Walsh. La Palabra no se Rinde*, Buenos Aires: Revista Caras y Caretas, Cuaderno 4, March 2007.
Serrano, Pascual 2011, *Contra la Neutralidad*, Barcelona: Península.

Vinelli, Natalia 2008, *ANCLA. Una Experiencia de Comunicación Clandestina Orientada por Rodolfo Walsh*, Buenos Aires: Editorial El Colectivo.
Verbitsky, Horacio 2006, *Ezeiza*, Buenos Aires: Editioral La Página.
–– (ed.) 1985, *Rodolfo Walsh y la Prensa Clandestina 1976-1978*, Buenos Aires: Ediciones de la Urraca.
Viñas, David 1996, *Literatura Argentina y Política*, Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana.
–– 2005, *Literatura Argentina y Política. De Lugones a Walsh, Vol. 2*, Buenos Aires: Santiago Arcos Editor.

Walsh, Rodolfo 2008, *El Violento Oficio de Escribir. Obra Periodística (1953-1977)*, Buenos Aires: Ediciones de la Flor.
–– 2007, *Ese Hombre y Otros Papeles Personales*, Buenos Aires: Ediciones de la Flor.
–– 'Cordobazo' 1969, in: http://www.memoriaabierta.org.ar/materiales/pdf/cordobazo.pdf
–– 2009, *Operación Masacre*, critical edition by Roberto Ferro, Buenos Aires: Ediciones de la Flor.
–– 2000, *Operación Masacre*, Buenos Aires: Ediciones de la Flor.
–– 2010, ¿Quién Mató a Rosendo?, Madrid: 451 Editores.
–– 2004, ¿Quién Mató a Rosendo?, Buenos Aires: Ediciones de la Flor.
–– 2004, *Caso Satanowsky*, Buenos Aires: Ediciones de la Flor.
–– 2008, *Los Oficios Terrestres*, Buenos Aires: Ediciones de la Flor.
–– 2008, *Un Kilo de Oro*, Buenos Aires: Ediciones de la Flor.
–– 2012, *Teatro*, Buenos Aires: Ediciones de la Flor.
–– 2008, *Variaciones en Rojo*, Buenos Aires: Ediciones de la Flor.
–– 2010, *Cuentos Completos*, Madrid: Veintisiete Letras.

APPENDIX 2

SAMPLE

This appendix includes an excerpt of the script *They Call Me Rodolfo Walsh* as a practical example, in which one can read the assemblage of varied sources for dramatic purposes and how the timelines are combined through techniques of flashbacks, montages and Walsh's voiceover in representing the importance of his memory in the formation of the character. Many other samples could have been chosen to achieve this goal, as well as for discussing the development of other relevant aspects of the research and writing of the script. The reason to chose this one in particular is due to its relevance in the drama of the character, because it presents the complexity of his conflict with his literary activity, while also establishing a relationship between past and present that helps to mark the path of the character's transition. This segment also shows the importance of the historical context in the dramatised events and offers a rich look at the usage and combination of both primary and secondary sources. Thus, here I proceed to expose briefly the events in the sample, contextualise those that need it and note, even if briefly, the sources used and arrangements made, hoping that the reading of the text itself will help to clarify how the data and sources were dramatically structured and for what purpose.

The sequence opens with a montage that shows Walsh locked in his place, struggling to write his novel in October of 1967. The montage is fictionalised from Walsh's own reflections on his difficulties with the novel found in his personal papers. There is also a reference to the weather, which announces the imminent storm as an *objective correlative* to the upcoming events that are about to affect the character's world, deeply enough to change him forever. Nevertheless, the element of the weather was *discovered* thanks to the interview with writer Ricardo Piglia, who remembered the hard rains during the days he found out about Che Guevara's death. The montage ends when Ferreyra arrives and, breathless, announces that Guevara has been killed in Bolivia.

The voiceover of Walsh –built up from the text he wrote dedicated to Guevara– brings him to his memories of Guevara during the years he lived and worked in Havana, highlighting the impact the news had on him. From the memory of 1959, Walsh's narration brings the action to January of 1968, again in Havana, where he finishes his speech in the Cultural Congress with the last words of his elegy to Guevara, a fact largely documented in many literary sources. The scene continues with the attendees giving him an overwhelming ovation and several friends and colleagues congratulating him for his moving words. During the coffee break that comes after, Eduardo Galeano asks him to join him in his visit to a tobacco factory

to learn about the role of the reader there –one of the men who reads news and literature to the tobacco workers while they work.

Once in the tobacco factory, Walsh and Galeano, as part of a group led by a guide explaining the literacy policies implemented by the Revolution, approach the main room. When they start to hear the voice of the reader, Walsh recognises that the text he is reading is the chapter *The Slaughter* from his book *Operation Massacre*. Moved by it, Walsh's voice starts to follow the reader's voice, recalling the actions in this central chapter of his first and influential testimonial novel, bringing the events to life as an adaptation from Walsh's text. The scene in the tobacco factory appeared when interviewing Galeano in 2010, who described it vividly. This was one of the greatest discoveries of the research fieldwork, as it was not documented through any other literary source,[533] and also because it provided the drama with a powerful way to introduce *Operation Massacre* and its importance for Walsh in a crucial point of the script.

Thus, through a new montage sequence, Walsh's voiceover, using texts taken from the different prologues and epilogues he wrote for *Operation Massacre* throughout its different editions, continues recalling what he went through after he learned about the events, reflecting on how his investigation affected his life and changed him for ever, from the moment he was playing chess in a café and someone approached him with the news that there was one executed person who was still alive. The montage shows Walsh meeting the "living executed" and publishing the first article of the series. We also learn of the disruption of his daily life when he notices people following him in different situations, until he gets a fake ID under the name of Francisco Freyre, which is underscored because he will use it later again several times, including at the end of his life. All of these events are dramatised and inspired by his own text.

This excerpt of the script concludes by bringing Walsh back to 1968, after his trip to Havana, now on his way to Madrid where he will meet Perón. The voiceover of Walsh, which drives his memory, suggests that his life has been "taken and brought by the times", opening his life to "any adventure" and to "start again" as many times before. These last sentences are taken from his autobiographical note and serve to announce the transition he will go through. Marked by Guevara's death and his strong commitment to expose the hidden *truth*, as he did in *Operation Massacre* in the past, what is about to come will show his departure from literature towards an active involvement in revolutionary movements, a shift that will definitely have no return after the meeting with Perón.

532] A brief comment on this anecdote can be found in an interview to Galeano about Walsh in: http://www.voltairenet.org/article143424.html

INT./EXT. RODOLFO'S APARTMENT - THE NOVEL - MONTAGE

- Rodolfo types, alone, smoking.

- Rodolfo stops and checks the text in the typewriter. He looks through the window: the clouds gathered, the sky turns gray.

- Rodolfo puts out a cigarette in a full ashtray.

- Rodolfo sees the typebars mashing the paper, he writes but then stops. He takes his glasses away and rubs his face. He looks through the window: it starts to rain and people run to hide.

- Rodolfo takes the paper from the typewriter, checks it out for a moment, crumples it and throws it away. The paper falls over a mountain of other crumpled papers.

- Rodolfo smokes, puts out one cigarette after another.

- Rodolfo types compulsively.

- Rodolfo takes his glasses away and rubs his eyes.

- Rodolfo crumples a paper, crumples another, throws them away.

- Outside it rains hard, flooding the streets.

- Rodolfo types, observing every letter of the typebars that falls with strength on the paper.

END OF MONTAGE

INT. RODOLFO'S APARTMENT - DAY

KNOCK on the door. Rodolfo stops typing, stands up and opens it: it's Lilia, who walks in breathless. Nervous, she gives him a newspaper.

LILIA
Now they did it... They got him.

Rodolfo takes the newspaper and reads the cover: "CHE GUEVARA REPORTED DEAD IN BOLIVIA".

RODOLFO (V.O.)
For whom the bell tolls? It tolls for us. It feels impossible to think of Guevara, from this mournful spring of Buenos Aires,
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RODOLFO (V.O.) (cont'd)
without thinking of Hemingway, of Camilo, of Masetti, of all those marvelous people that made up Havana in '59 and '60.

INT. OFFICE - PRENSA LATINA - NIGHT

SUPER: 1959. HAVANA.

Rodolfo checks some documents while smoking and typing.

RODOLFO (V.O.)
It feels a bit embarrassing to be here sitting in front of a typewriter, even knowing that that is too a kind of fatality, even if one could find comfort in the idea that it is a fatality that is useful for something.

The typebars get blocked. He tries to unblock them but they don't work. He puts out one cigarette and lights the next one.

Jorge Ricardo MASETTI (32) appears by the door.

MASETTI
Rodolfo, come to have some mate.

Rodolfo stands up and walks out with Masetti.

INT. EDITORIAL OFFICE PRENSA LATINA/MASETTI'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Rodolfo follows Masetti to an office. A YOUNG WARRANT OFFICER guards the door with a rifle. Inside Rodolfo sees CHE's back between the smoke of a Montecristo no. 4 cigar.

RODOLFO (V.O.)
Many were luckier than me, they talked at length with Guevara. I only listened to him. Guevara didn't propose himself as a hero: he could be a hero on the same level as everybody else. But this wasn't true for the rest: sometimes it was easier to give up than to follow him.

INT. CONFERENCE HALL - DAY

SUPER: 1968. HAVANA.

Rodolfo talks with a firm voice from a stage in the Cultural Congress of Havana to a wide and crowded hall. A HUNDRED INTELLECTUALS listen with attention between the smoke of tobacco.

RODOLFO
To many of us it's difficult to avoid the embarrassment, not of being alive, but that Guevara has died with so few around. We were slow, guilty? It's useless to discuss the matter, but that feeling that I talk about remains, at least for me, and perhaps it is a new point of departure. Sooner or later someone will go to hell on this continent. It won't be Che's memory, that now is scattered in a hundred cities, given to the paths of those that never met him.

The participants stand up and CLAP, touched.

On the way to his chair, Rodolfo gets a warm reception. He sits down next to Paco, who looks at him with pride. One row behind, JULIO Cortázar (54) touches his shoulder. Rodolfo turns around.

JULIO
Very moving, Rodolfo.

RODOLFO
Thanks, Julio.

One COORDINATOR walks to the stage and everybody listens.

COORDINATOR
Compañeros. We're going to take a break. There's coffee at the entrance. We'll continue in half an hour.

The participants leave the hall messily, talking among themselves. From the front row, EDUARDO Galeano (28) walks toward Rodolfo.

EDUARDO
Great speech, Rodolfo.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Rodolfo smiles thankful and walks out with Eduardo and Paco, who walks a few steps ahead and grabs a UNIFORMED MULATTA working for the event by the waist.

PACO
The coffee is this way?

The mulatta turns around surprised. Paco turns his head to the other two mocking and winking his eye.

RODOLFO
The girls are gonna ruin him.

EDUARDO
In this island the girls do more harm to men than the tanks.

Both walk outside the hall laughing.

INT. ENTRANCE - CONFERENCE HALL - DAY

Rodolfo and Eduardo have coffee. The entrance is filled with the participants, who talk enthusiastically among themselves. In the back Paco talks with the mulatta, who seems serious.

EDUARDO
They invited me to a tobacco factory and I want to see a reader. Do you want to join me?

RODOLFO
When?

EDUARDO
They'll pick me up after this session. It seems the readers at the factories started back in the 19th century and now the Revolution is taking a lot of care with the content--

Suddenly, they note the mulatta moving Paco away with courtesy but firmly. He freezes.

UNIFORMED MULATTA
Your behaviour is disrespectful to me, sir. Inappropriate of a friend of Cuba.

The mulatta leaves and Paco walks towards Rodolfo and Eduardo, who burst out laughing.

INT. CORRIDOR - TOBACCO FACTORY - NIGHT

A Cuban GUIDE (25) walks in front of Rodolfo and Eduardo, who are part of a group with another TEN PEOPLE.

GUIDE
Cuba had almost a million illiterate people by August 1961. The Literacy Campaign was accompanied by a series of measures for stimulating reading.

The group approaches a big arch to access the main room. Indecipherable words ECHO off the walls.

GUIDE
Back in January 1961 a previously nonexistent library network was developed. In 1962 the Cuban National Publishing House was established--

INT. MAIN ROOM - TOBACCO FACTORY - NIGHT

When they cross the arch, the guide, followed by Rodolfo, Eduardo and the group, enter an open space where TWENTY WORKERS pamper the finishing of cigars in their tables. From a corner, the indecipherable words take form now in the voice of the READER (30).

READER
It’s time. A brief dialogue, horrific, marks it. ’What are you gonna do to us?’ one asks. ’Walk ahead!’ they answer him. ’We’re innocents!’ shout a few.

Rodolfo is stunned and notices the book between the reader’s hands: "OPERATION MASSACRE". Eduardo stops and looks at him.

READER
’Don’t be afraid’ they reply. ’We won’t do anything to you.’ WE WON’T DO ANYTHING TO YOU! The guards push them towards the rubbish dump like a frightened flock. The van stops, lighting them up with its headlamps.

Rodolfo accompanies the words moving his lips and smiles subtly. Eduardo puts a hand on his shoulder.

READER
The prisoners seem to float on a very lively lake of light. Rodríguez Moreno steps down, gun in hand.

RODOLFO
(Murmurs)
The prisoners seem to float on a very lively lake of light. Rodríguez Moreno steps down, gun in hand.

EXT. JOSÉ LEÓN SUÁREZ DUMP - NIGHT

SUPER: JUNE 1956.

NINE MEN, wearing humble clothes, walk scared by a dump, lit by powerful spotlights.

RODOLFO (V.O.)
From that instant the tale fragments, explodes in twelve or thirteen nodules of panic.

One man turns his head slightly and whispers something inaudible to another. Another walks clumsily and turns around blinded by the light. The silhouette of a POLICE SQUAD becomes visible in the distance, in front of few cars and a police van.

Another man (LIVRAGA) turns to the left stealthily. All of a sudden the spotlights switch off and he stays invisible in the darkness. A few metres ahead he sees a ditch and walks a few steps towards it.

Among the squad, the inspector RODRÍGUEZ MORENO appears.

RODRÍGUEZ MORENO
Stop!

The nine men stop. The squad steps back to take distance and put their hands on the bolt of their mauser pistols.

Livraga hears the pistols and looks at the ditch.

RODRÍGUEZ MORENO
Walk ahead! Elbow with elbow!

A MAN kneels down in front of the squad.

MAN
For my children... For my chil--

He starts throwing up violently.

The squad starts the shooting. A few men fall down and others remain paralysed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

In the police van there are SHOUTS, one GUNSHOT and TWO MEN step outside and walk away. The squad turns around doubtful.

In the dump, the group of men split running away.

The spotlights switch on again. Rodríguez Moreno hits one man in the squad.

RODRÍGUEZ MORENO
Shoot them!

Livraga throw himself on the floor. A burst of gunfire DEAFENS in his back. Next to him he hears a GROAN and a body FALLING.

The other man continues kneeling in front of the squad. Someone rests a pistol in his nape and SHOOTS.

A second BURST of gunfire knocks down another two bodies while others run disappearing in the dark.

Livraga remains motionless on the floor. It is totally silent. He looks at the spotlights, the smoke from the gunpowder and the squad walking against the light.

RODOLFO (V.O.)
Over the bodies lying down on the rubbish dump, by the light of the headlamps where the acrid smoke of gunpowder boils, some groans float.

Livraga hears a GROAN a few metres away, some boots that stop and a SHOT that finishes with it. The boots continue, stop and walk back over their steps to finish another GROAN. Livraga, scared, hears the books walking and closes his eyes, desperate when he sees them stopping in front of him.

A SHOT fades in the dark sky, where the smoke of the shooting gets mixed with the mist.

RODOLFO (V.O.)
Operation Massacre changed my life. Making it I understood that, in addition to my intimate perplexity, there was a threatening outside world.

INT. CAFE - DAY

Rodolfo plays chess with an OLD MAN. He sweats, drinks beer and finishes a cigarette.

RODOLFO (V.O.)
Can I get back to the chess? I can. To the chess and to the literature, to the serious novel that I plan, and to other things I do to make a living and I call journalism.

A STRANGER approaches him to talk in his ear.

STRANGER
(Whispers)
There's an executed man who lives.

Rodolfo turns around and sees the silhouette of the stranger fading in the shades and leaving the cafe.

VARIOUS - WRITING OPERATION MASSACRE - MONTAGE

- EXT. JOSÉ LEÓN SUÁREZ DUMP - DAY - Rodolfo looks at the landscape. His colleague ENRIQUETA walks by his side with a map in a paper and points to the other side. He observes with a camera in his hand and sees a rubbish dump, incandescent due to the shining cans. Enriqueta smiles proud. He looks at her with a half-smile.

- INT. ROOM - DAY - In a dark and almost empty room, Rodolfo interviews Livraga with a bulky recorder turning its heads.

RODOLFO (V.O.)
I wasn't a Peronist and I had no intention of becoming one.

- INT. RODOLFO'S ROOM - HOUSE IN LA PLATA - NIGHT - Following the turn of heads in the recorder, Rodolfo transcribes the interview in a typewriter. He takes one paper from it and puts it with others. The cover reads "I WAS EXECUTED TOO".

RODOLFO (V.O.)
But I learned that the partisan's distances are maybe the most superficial ones that separate men.

- EXT. NEWSSTAND - DAWN - A wad of magazines with a cord falls on a bunch of newspapers. The NEWSPAPER SELLER cuts the cord discovering the cover of "REVOLUCIÓN NACIONAL", which reads "I WAS EXECUTED TOO".

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RODOLFO (V.O.)
It must be understood that I have lost some hope. In justice, in reparation, in democracy...

- INT./EXT. BUS - NIGHT - Rodolfo reads a book in a seat and notices a MAN with a newspaper observing him every now and then.

RODOLFO (V.O.)
In what once was my trade, and it's not anymore.

- EXT. STREET/HOUSE DOOR - NIGHT - Rodolfo takes his keys to open the door. A car ACCELERATES behind him and he sees it passing by with TWO MEN staring at him.

- INT. KITCHEN - HOUSE IN LA PLATA - NIGHT - Rodolfo finishes eating with his wife, ELINA Tejerina, and daughters VICKY and PATRICIA. He stands up and says goodbye with gestures of affection.

Rodolfo looks at his daughters. Elina looks at him with a sad expression. He kisses the three of them on the cheeks and leaves.

- INT. OFFICE - NIGHT - Under a faint light, a MAN gives Rodolfo an identity card. When he opens it, reads the name: "FRANCISCO FREYRE". Rodolfo stands up and thanks with a gesture.

END OF MONTAGE

INT. PLANE - NIGHT

SUPER: 1968.

Rodolfo rests in a crowded plane. In his hands he carries a book by "ROBERTO FERNÁNDEZ RETAMAR".

RODOLFO (V.O.)
Actually, I have been taken and brought by the times.

INT. MADRID-BARAJAS AIRPORT LOUNGE - DAY

Rodolfo walks by a door towards a public phone. He puts in some coins and waits for a answer. He says something inaudible.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RODOLFO (V.O.)
Still now there are moments in which I feel available for any adventure, to start again, as I have many times.

Rodolfo listens carefully to the VOICE in the phone.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adamson, Walter L. 1985, *Marx and the Disillusionment of Marxism*, Berkley: University of California Press.

–– 1980, *Hegemony and Revolution. A Study of Antonio Gramsci's Political and Cultural Theory*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press.

Adorno, Theodor W. and Horkheimer, Max 2002, *Dialectic of Enlightenment. Philosophical Fragments*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Adoue, Silvia Beatriz 2011, *Walsh, el Criptógrafo. Escritura y Acción Política en la Obra de Rodolfo Walsh*, Buenos Aires: Editorial El Colectivo and Dialektik.

Ambar, Saladin 2014, *Malcolm X at Oxford Union. Racial Politics in a Global Era*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Anderson, Perry 1998, *The Origins of Postmodernity*, London: Verso.

Aristotle 1998, *Poetics*, trans. S. H. Butcher, Ebook: Orange Street Press Classics.

Badaró, Máximo and Forné, Anna (ed.) 2011, 'Memorias de la Represión en Argentina y Uruguay: Narrativas, Actores e Instituciones', *Stockholm Review of Latin American Studies*, 7, Institute of Latin American Studies Stockholms Universitet.

Barthes, Roland 1991, *Mythologies*, translated by Annette Lavers, New York: The Noonday Press.

Baschetti, Roberto (ed.) 1994, *Rodolfo Walsh, Vivo*, Buenos Aires: Ediciones de la Flor.

Baugh, Scott L. 2004, 'Manifesting La Historia: Systems of 'Development' and the New Latin American Cinema Manifesto', *Film and History*, 34, 1.

Benjamin, Jules R. 1990, *The United States and the Origins of the Cuban Revolution. An Empire of Liberty in an Age of National Liberation*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Benjamin, Walter 1969, *Illuminations*, translated by Harry Zohn, New York: Schocken Books.

–– 1998, *Understanding Brecht*, translated by Anna Bostock, London and New York: Verso.

Beverley, John 2004, *Subalternity and Representation. Arguments in Cultural Theory*, Durham and London: Duke University Press.

–– 2004, *Testimonio. On the Politics of Truth*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

–– and Achugar, Hugo (eds.) 2002, *La Voz del Otro: Testimonio, Subalternidad y Verdad Narrativa*, Ciudad de Guatemala: Ediciones Papiro.

Bingham, Dennis 2010, *Whose Lives are They Anyway? The Biopic as Contemporary Film Genre*, New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press.
Bloch, Ernst; Lukács, Georg; Brecht, Bertolt; Benjamin, Walter; and Adorno Theodor 1980, *Aesthetics and Politics*, edited and translated by Ronald Taylor, London: Verso.
Bourdieu, Pierre 1969, *'Intellectual Field and Creative Project'*, *Social Science Information*, 8.
–– 1977, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Bruner, Jerome 2004, 'Life as Narrative', *Social Research*, 71, 3.
–– 1991, 'The Narrative Construction of Reality', *Critical Inquiry*, 18.
Buchsbaum, Jonathan 2011, 'One, Two... Third Cinemas', *Third Text*, 25, 1.
Burton, Julianne (ed.) 1990, *The Social Documentary in Latin America*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
Callinicos, Alex 1989, *Against Postmodernism. A Marxist Critique*, Cambridge and Oxford: Polity Press.
–– 2004, *Making History. Agency, Structure, and Change in Social Theory*, Leiden and Boston: Brill.

Canby, Vincent, 'Argentine Epic', *New York Times*, 26th February 1971, in: http://www.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=9906E0DB1530E73BBC4E51DFB466838A669EDE
Carr, E. H. 1987, *What is History?*, New York: Penguin.
Casa de las Américas, 45, November-December 1967.
Casa de las Américas, 46, January-February 1968.
Casa de las Américas, 200, July-September 1995.
Casaus, Víctor 1982, 'El Género Testimonio y el Cine Cubano', *Cine Cubano*, 101.
Chanan, Michael (ed.) 1983, *Twenty Five Years of the New Latin American Cinema*, London: British Film Institute/Channel Four.
–– 1997, 'The Changing Geography of Third Cinema', *Screen*, Special Latin American Issue, 38, 4.
Chandler, Daniel 1997, 'An Introduction to Genre Theory', in http://visual-memory.co.uk/daniel/Documents/intgenre/intgenre.html
Crehan, Kate 2011, 'Gramsci's concept of common sense: a useful concept for anthropologists?', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 16, 2.
Coutinho, Carlos Nelson 1998, *Gramsci e America Latina*, São Paulo: Paz e Terra.
–– 1986, 'Gramsci en Brasil', *Cuadernos Políticos*, 46.
–– 1991, 'Gramsci y Brasil: Variadas Lecturas de un Pensamiento', *Nueva Sociedad*, 115.
–– 2012, *Gramsci's Political Thought*, Leiden: Brill.
Custen, George F. 1992, *Bio/Pics. How Hollywood Constructed Public History*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Dyson, Michael Eric 1995, *Making Malcolm. The Myth and Meaning of Malcolm X*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.

During, Simon (ed.) 1999, *The Cultural Studies Reader*, London and New York: Routledge.
Dussel, Enrique 1994, *1942: El Encubrimiento del Otro. Hacia el Origen del "Mito de la Modernidad"*, La Paz: Plural Editores.
'Estados Generales del Tercer Cine: Los Documentos de Montreal. 1974', *REHIME Cuadernos de la Red de Historia de los Medios*, 3, Summer 2013-2014, Buenos Aires: Prometeo Libros.

Eshun, Kodwo and Gray, Ros 2011, 'The Militant Image: A Ciné-Geography', *Third Text*, 25, 1.
Espinosa, Julio García 1995, *La Doble Moral del Cine*, Bogotá: Editorial Voluntad.
–– 2009, *Algo de Mí*, La Habana: Ediciones ICAIC.
Estrade, Paul 2000, *José Martí. Los Fundamentos de la Democracia en Latinoamérica*, Madrid: Doce Calles.

Fanon, Frantz 1963, translated by Constance Farrington, *The Wretched of the Earth*, New York: Grove Press.
Fernández Colorado, Luis (ed.) 2001, *Cuadernos de la Academia*, 9 (Actas del VIII Congreso de la AEHC), Madrid: Academia de la Artes y las Ciencias Cinematográficas de España.
Ferro, Marc 2005, 'La Historia en el Cine', in: http://www.aleph.org.mx/jspui/bitstream/56789/8141/1/DOCT2065560_ARTICULO_1.pdf
Forner, Phillip S. (ed.) 1975, *Inside the Monster. Writings on the United States and American Imperialism by José Martí*, New York: Monthly Review Press.
Francaviglia, Richard and Rodnitzky, Jerry (ed.) 2007, *Lights, Camera, History. Portraying the Past in Film*, College Station: Texas A&M University Press..
Francese, Joseph (ed.) 2009, *Perspectives on Gramsci. Politics, Culture and Social Theory*, London and New York: Routledge.
Freire, Paulo 1985, *The Politics of Education. Culture, Power and Liberation*, Westport: Bergin & Garvey Publishers.

Gabriel, Teshome, 'Third Cinema Updated', in: http://teshomegabriel.net/third-cinema-updated
–– 'Third Cinema as Guardian of Popular Memory: Towards a Third Aesthetics', in: http://teshomegabriel.net/third-cinema-as-guardian-of-popular-memory
–– 1982, *Third Cinema in the Third World: The Aesthetics of Liberation*, Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press.
Gaddis, John Lewis 2002, *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
Galeano, Eduardo 1997, *The Open Veins of Latin America. Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent*, New York: Monthly Review Press.
Getino, Octavio 1979, *A Diez Años de "Hacia un Tercer Cine"*, Ciudad de México: Textos Breves 2 and Filmoteca UNAM.

Gill, Stephen (ed.) 1993, *Gramsci, Historical Materialism and International Relations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Gilman, Claudia 2003, *Entre la Pluma y el Fusil: Debates y Dilemas del Escritor Revolucionario en América Latina*, Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI Editores.
Gramsci, Antonio 2000, *The Gramsci Reader. Selected Writings 1916-1935*, edited by David Forgacs, New York: New York University Press.
–– 1999, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, edited and translated by Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, London: ElecBook.
–– 1981, *Cuadernos de la Cárcel. Edición Crítica del Instituto Gramsci, Tomos 1 a 6*, Ciudad de México: Ediciones Era.
Grasselli, Fabiana 2010, 'Concepto de Vanguardia y Escritura Testimonial en los Programas Estético-Políticos de Rodolfo Walsh y Francisco Urondo', *Espectáculo-Revista de Estudios Literarios*, in: https://pendientedemigracion.ucm.es/info/especulo/numero45/walsuron.html
–– 2012 'Una Literatura Peligrosa: Relatos Testimoniales y Sectores Subalternos en el Programa Estético-Político de Rodolfo Walsh', *Estudio Sociales Contemporáneos*, 7/8.
–– 2012, 'Rodolfo Walsh y Francisco Urondo, el Oficio de Escribir', in: http://www.eumed.net/tesis-doctorales/2012/fg/politizacion-arte-Rodolfo-Walsh.html
–– and Salomone, Mariano 2011, 'La Escritura Testimonial de Rodolfo Walsh: Politización del Arte y Experiencia Histórica', *Aisthesis*, 49.
Green, Marcus E. (ed.) 2011, *Rethinking Gramsci*, London and New York: Routledge.
Guevara, Alfredo 1998, *Revolución es Lucidez*, La Habana: Ediciones ICAIC.
–– 2003, *Tiempo de Fundación*, Madrid: Iberautor.
–– and Rocha, Glauber 2002, *Un Sueño Compartido*, Madrid: Iberautor.
Guevara, Ernesto 1965, *El Hombre y el Socialismo en Cuba*, in: https://www.marxists.org/espanol/guevara/65-socyh.htm
Guneratne, Anthony R. and Dissanayake, Wimal (eds.) 2003, *Rethinking Third Cinema*, New York and London: Routledge.
Gutiérrez Alea, Tomás 2009, *Dialéctica del Espectador*, La Habana: Ediciones EICTV.

Hall, Stuart 1986, 'Gramsci's Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity', *Journal for Communication Inquiry*, 10, 5.
Harvey, David 1992, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, Cambridge and Oxford: Blackwell.
Haslett, Moyra 2000, *Marxist Literary and Cultural Studies*, New York: St. Martin's Press.
Hobsbawm, Eric 1980, 'The Revival of Narrative: Some Comments', *Past and Present*, 86.
Hoerl, Kristen 2008, 'Cinematic Jujitsu: Resisting White Hegemony through the American Dream in Spike Lee's *Malcolm X*, *Communication Studies*, 59, 4.

Ives, Peter 2004, *Language and Hegemony in Gramsci*, London, Ann Arbor and Winnipeg: Pluto Press and Fernwood Publishing.

James, C.L.R. 1989, *The Black Jacobins*, New York: Vintage Books.
Jameson, Fredric 1981, *The Political Unconscious. Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act,* London and New York: Routledge.
–– 1991, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Durham: Duke University Press.
Jones, Steve 2006, *Antonio Gramsci*, London and New York: Routledge.
Jozami, Eduardo 2011, *Rodolfo Walsh. La Palabra y la Acción*, second edition, Buenos Aires: Grupo Editorial Norma and Página/12.
–– 2006, *Rodolfo Walsh. La Palabra y la Acción*, first edition, Buenos Aires: Grupo Editorial Norma.

Klein, Naomi 2008, *The Shock Doctrine*, New York: Metropolitan Books.

Lafforgue, Jorge (ed.) 2000, *Textos de y sobre Rodolfo Walsh*, Buenos Aires: Alianza Editorial.
Landy, Marcia 1994, *Film, Politics, and Gramsci*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.
–– 1997, *Cinematic Uses of the Past*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.
–– (ed.) 2001, *The Historical Film. History and Memory in Media*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
Larraín, Jorge 2005, ¿América Latina Moderna? Globalización e Identidad, Santiago de Chile: LOM Ediciones.
Lee, Spike and Wiley, Ralph 1993, *By any Means Necessary. The Trials and Tribulations of the Making of Malcolm X...*, London: Vintage Books.
Lehtisalo, Anneli 2011, 'As if Alive before Us: the Pleasures of Verisimilitude in Biographical Fiction Films', *New Readings*, 11.
Letwin, David; Stockdale, Joe and Stockdale, Robin 2008, *The Architecture of Drama*, Lanham, Toronto and Plymouth: The Scarecrow Press.
Livingstone, Grace 2009, *America's Backyard. The United States and Latin America from the Monroe Doctrine to the War on Terror*, London and New York: Zed Books and Latin America Bureau.
Lotersztain, Cacho and Bufano, Sergio (eds.) 2012, *ANCLA. Rodolfo Walsh y la Agencia de Noticias Clandestina: 1976-1977*, Buenos Aires: Ejercitar la Memoria Editores.
Löwenthal, Leo 1984, *Literature and Mass Culture*, New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers.

Marcuse, Herbert 1978, *The Aesthetic Dimension. Towards a Critique of Marxist Aesthetics*, Boston: Beacon Press.

Martí, José 2007, *Nuestra América*, Barcelona: Linkgua Ediciones.
Martín Peña, Fernando 2013, *El Cine Quema. Jorge Cedrón*, Buenos Aires: INCAA.
Marx, Karl 1888, 'Theses on Feuerbach', in: https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/theses/theses.htm
–– and Engels, Friedrich 2002, *The Communist Manifesto*, London: Penguin.
McCaughan, Michael 2002, *True Crimes: Rodolfo Walsh. The Life and Times of a Radical Intellectual*, London: Latin America Bureau.
Mestman, Mariano 1997, 'Semanario CGT. Rodolfo Walsh: Periodismo y Clase Obrera', *Causas y Azares*, 6.
–– 1999 '"La Hora de los Hornos", el Peronismo y la imagen del "Che"', *Secuencias*, 10.
–– 2002 'From Algiers to Buenos Aires. The Third World Cinema Committee (1973-1974)', *New Cinemas: Journal of Contemporary Film*, 1, 1.
–– and Varela, Mirta (ed.) 2013, *Masas, Pueblo, Multitud en Cine y Televisión*, Buenos Aires: Eudeba.
Mignolo, Walter D. 2005, *The Idea of Latin America*, Malden and Oxford: Blackwell.
–– 1995, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance. Literacy, Territoriality, and Colonization*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
Miller, Toby and Stam, Robert (ed.) 2004, *A Companion to Film Theory*, Malden, Oxford and Victoria: Blackwell.
–– 2000, *Film and Theory. An Anthology*, Malden and Oxford: Blackwell.
Mink, Louis O. 1970, 'History and Fiction as Modes of Comprehension', *New Literary History*, 1, 3.
Montero, Hugo and Portela, Ignacio 2010, *Rodolfo Walsh. Los Años Montoneros*, Buenos Aires: Ediciones Continente.
Morejón Arnaiz, Idalia 2006, 'Testimonio de una Casa', *Revista Encuentro*, 40.

Nance, Kimberley A. 2006, *Can Literature Promote Justice? Trauma Narrative and Social Action in Latin American 'Testimonio'*, Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.
Neale, Steve 1980, *Genre*, London: British Film Institute.
Nietzsche, Friedrich 2010, *The Use and Abuse of History*, New York: Cosimo.

O'Gorman, Edmundo 2003, *La Invención de América*, Ciudad de México: Fondo de Cultura Económica.
'Operación Rodolfo Walsh', *Primera Plana*, 489, 13th June 1972.
Oteiza, Enrique (ed.), *Cultura y Política en los Años 60*, Buenos Aires: Ediciones CBC.

Piglia, Ricardo 2000, 'Tres Propuestas para el Próximo Milenio (y Cinco Dificultades)', in: http://www.casa.co.cu/publicaciones/revistacasa/222/piglia.htm

Quijano, Aníbal 2000, 'El Fantasma del Desarrollo en América Latina', *Revista Venezolana de Economía y Ciencias Sociales*, 2.

Ramos, Jorge Abelardo 2011, *Historia de la Nación Latinoamericana*, Buenos Aires: Ediciones Continente.
Resurrecting a Revolutionary Cinema. The Hour of the Furnaces, 4th April 2010.
Ricoeur, Paul 1984, *Time and Narrative, Volume 1*, translated by Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer, London: The University of Chicago Press.
–– 1980, 'Narrative Time', *Critical Inquiry*, 7, 1.
Roberts, Geoffrey (ed.) 2001, *The History and Narrative Reader*, New York: Routledge.
–– 1999, 'J. H. Hexter: Narrative History and Common Sense', *Chronicon*, 3.
Rocha, Glauber 1997, *Cartas ao Mundo*, São Paulo: Companhia das Letras.
Rosenstone, Robert 1988, 'History in Images/History in Words: Reflections on the Possibility of Really Putting History onto Film', *The American Historical Review*, 93, 5.
–– 2006, *History on Film/Film on History*, Harlow: Pearson.
Rutherford, Jonathan (ed.) 1990, *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Said, Edward 1979, *Orientalism*, New York: Vintage Books.
Sartre, Jean-Paul 1992, *Being and Nothingness*, translated by Hazel E. Barnes, New York: Washington Square Press.
–– 2007, *Existentialism is a Humanism*, translated by Carol Macomber, New Haven: Yale University Press.
Schneider, Gregor-S 2011, 'La Biografía como Literatura de la Cultura de Masas: Los Análisis de Leo Löwenthal sobre la Industria Cultural', *Constelaciones – Revista de Teoría Crítica*, 3.
Serrano, Pascual 2011, *Contra la Neutralidad*, Barcelona: Península.
Shaw, Donald L. 1998, *The Post-Boom in Spanish American Fiction*, New York: State University of New York Press.
Sklar, Robert and Musser, Charles (eds.) 1990, *Resisting Images. Essays on Cinema and History*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
Stone, Lawrence 1979, 'The Revival of Narrative: Reflections on a New Old History', *Past and Present*, 85.
Swartz, David 2013, *Symbolic Power, Politics, and Intellectuals. The Political Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*, Chicago and London: University Of Chicago Press.

Thomas, Peter D. 2009, *The Gramscian Moment. Philosophy, Hegemony and Marxism*, Leiden and Boston: Brill.
Turim, Maureen 1989, *Flashbacks in Film. Memory and History*, New York and London: Routledge.
–– 2001, 'The Trauma of History: Flashbacks upon Flashbacks', *Screen*, 42, 2.

Vaughn, Stephen (ed.) 1985, *The Vital Past. Writings on the Uses of History*, Athens: University of Georgia Press.
Velleggia, Susana 2009, *La Máquina de la Mirada*, Buenos Aires: Editorial Altamira.

Vinelli, Natalia 2008, *ANCLA. Una Experiencia de Comunicación Clandestina Orientada por Rodolfo Walsh*, Buenos Aires: Editorial El Colectivo.

Walsh, Rodolfo 2008, *El Violento Oficio de Escribir. Obra Periodística (1953-1977)*, Buenos Aires: Ediciones de la Flor.
–– '1 de Mayo: Mensaje a los Trabajadores y al Pueblo Argentino', *CGT*, 1, 1st May 1968.
–– 2007, *Ese Hombre y Otros Papeles Personales*, Buenos Aires: Ediciones de la Flor.
–– 'Cordobazo' 1969, in: http://www.memoriaabierta.org.ar/materiales/pdf/cordobazo.pdf
–– 2009, *Operación Masacre*, critical edition by Roberto Ferro, Buenos Aires: Ediciones de la Flor.
–– 2000, *Operación Masacre*, Buenos Aires: Ediciones de la Flor.
–– 2010, ¿Quién Mató a Rosendo?, Madrid: 451 Editores.
Waswo, Richard 1980, 'Story as Historiography in the Waverly Novels', *ELH*, 47,2.
Wayne, Mike 2001, *Political Film. The Dialectics of Third Cinema*, London and Sterling: Pluto Press.
–– 2003, *Marxism and Media Studies. Key Concepts and Contemporary Trends*, London and Sterling: Pruto Press.
–– (ed.) 2005, *Understanding Film. Marxist Perspectives*, London and Ann Arbor: Pluto Press.
White, Hayden 1973, *Metahistory*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
–– 1980, 'The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality', *Critical Inquiry*, 7, 1.
–– 1988, 'Historiography and Historiophoty', *The American Historical Review*, 93, 5.
Willemen, Paul 1987, 'The Third Cinema Question. Notes and Reflection', *Framework*, 34.
–– and Pines, Jim 1989, *Questions of Third Cinema*, London: British Film Institute.
Williams, Raymond 2007, *Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists*, London and New York: Verso.
Winn, J. Emmett 2001, 'Challenges & Compromises in Spike Lee's *Malcolm X*', *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 18, 4.

Zinn, Howard 2007, *A Power Governments Cannot Suppress*, San Francisco: City Lights Books.
–– 1997, *The Zinn Reader*, New York: Seven Stories Press.
–– 1999, *A People's History of the United States*, New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

LIST OF PICTURES

Aalto-DD 25/2015

Film & Making Other History studies the ideas informing the creation of a potential counterhegemonic cinema. With a special emphasis on the contributions of Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, the role of narrative in shaping history appears here as seminal to elaborating an alternative proposal in the fields of historical and biographical film practices.

This work covers a series of questions related to the historical representation of the subaltern and the usage of biographical forms for counterhegemonic purposes. Can alternative approaches to history make use of hegemonic forms for representing the subaltern without being absorbed by hegemony itself? This book rethinks the strategies that can be pursued to achieve this aim through the examination of cultural practices that have faced these inquiries before, such as Latin American testimonial literature and Third Cinema, as well as an analysis of Spike Lee's *Malcolm X*.

ISBN 978-952-60-6098-9 (printed)
ISBN 978-952-60-6099-6 (pdf)
ISSN-L 1799-4934
ISSN 1799-4934 (printed)
ISSN 1799-4942 (pdf)

Aalto University
School of Arts, Design and Architecture
Department of Film, TV and Scenography
books.aalto.fi
www.aalto.fi